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V. I. LENIN

PÁGINAS ESCOGIDAS

LA CAMPAÑA POR EL PROGRAMA
LA TÁCTICA
Y LA ORGANIZACIÓN DEL PARTIDO

(1895 - 1904)

TOMO PRIMERO

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ADVERTENCIA DEL EDITOR

La presente edición de "Páginas escogidas" de V. I. Lenin constará de cuatro volúmenes distribuidos así: I—La campaña por el programa; la táctica y la organización del partido (1893-1904). II—El Partido bolchevique en acción (1904-1914). III—Durante la guerra (1914-octubre 1917). IV—En el poder (1917-1923).

El tomo primero está traducido de la edición francesa preparada por P. Pascal, cuidadosamente revisada con arreglo al texto ruso de la última edición de las Obras Completas de Lenin, editadas por el "Instituto de Lenin" de Moscú. La traducción y todas las notas explicativas están tomadas de la edición francesa, con algunas modificaciones que hemos creido indispensables.

Las notas de la Redacción están firmadas: (*Red.*) Las de Lenin: (*L.*)

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¿QUÉ HERENCIA REPUDIAMOS? (1)

Los reveses de la guerra de Crimea (1853-1856), *que pusieron de manifiesto el estado de inferioridad en que se encontraba Rusia con respecto a las otras potencias, dieron origen a una violenta reacción contra el régimen autoritario que había dominado durante los 30 años del reinado de Nicolás I, a un movimiento general de protesta contra el régimen de la servidumbre, que hacía imposible todo progreso económico, y a un renacimiento de la opinión liberal, que exigió, y acabó por obtener, la gran reforma, la liberación de los campesinos. Los publicistas de esta época son burgueses reformadores, cuyas doctrinas Lenin cree poder resumir en estos tres puntos:* 1.°, *un odio declarado contra el régimen feudal con todas sus consecuencias económicas, sociales y jurídicas;* 2.°, *una devoción profunda por las "luces", por todo lo que puede aumentar la libertad y aproximar Rusia a los países europeos;* 3.°, *un interés sincero por el pueblo, y en particular por los campesinos, y la convicción de que bastará abolir la servidumbre y sus supervivencias para hacer reinar el bienestar general* (2).

El conjunto de esas ideas, teniendo en cuenta las diferencias de tiempo y de lugar, se parece, en cierto modo, a las que se encuentran en los filósofos y los economistas de fines del siglo XVIII, en Francia. Los publicistas avanzados de esa época tenían la costumbre, para no despertar las susceptibilidades de la censura, de designarlas con el término "la herencia".

Cuando, después de las "reformas" de 1860-1869 (*abolición de la servidumbre, creación de municipalidades autónomas* o zemstvos, *reforma judicial*) *todo el mundo pudo darse cuenta de que la "libertad" no era una panacea, apareció un nuevo movimiento, el de*

(1) *Obras completas*, segunda edición rusa, t. II, páginas 321-332. (*Red.*

(2) Véase la fin del capítulo primero de la obra de Lenin: *¿Qué herencia repudiamos?* (Red.)

los populistas (narodniki). Este movimiento no busca ya el remedio a los males del país en la imitación del Occidente, sino en el retorno a las sanas tradiciones de la comuna rural y de la asociación de trabajo llamada artel, que distinguen radicalmente al pueblo ruso de todos los otros y que le conducirán directamente al socialismo sin pasar por los tormentos del capitalismo (1).

La buena época del populismo va de 1870 a 1881, con las organizaciones Zemlia i Volia (La Tierra y la Libertad) primero, y después con la Narodnaia Volia (La Libertad Popular), que no olvidaron la propaganda entre los obreros y se lanzaron a la lucha revolucionaria directa. Lenin ha profesado siempre un gran respeto por sus héroes, como Pedro Aléxeiev y los terroristas de 1880.

Las represiones que siguieron a la ejecución de Alejandro II, en 1881, destruyeron las organizaciones populistas, pero no las tendencias populistas en la prensa y en la sociedad.

Por otra parte, los progresos de la industria, el aumento del número de obreros de fábrica (870.000 en 1882, 1.318.000 en 1887) y, en general, el desenvolvimiento del capitalismo en Rusia, dieron nacimiento a un movimiento proletario que encontraba su expresión en la doctrina marxista.

A partir de este momento, se asiste a una concurrencia encarnizada entre las dos tendencias: populista y marxista. El populismo sigue siendo todavía influyente, gracias a economistas y teóricos de talento, como M. Mijailovski, director de la revista mensual Russkoye Bogatstvo (La Riqueza Rusa); V. Vorontsov, colaborador de la misma revista y autor, en 1882, de una obra entonces célebre sobre Los destinos del capitalismo en Rusia (firmada con las iniciales V. V.), y N. Danielson, autor, en 1883, de Esbozo de nuestra economía nacional después de la reforma, publicada bajo el pseudónimo N-on.

La crítica que P. Struve hizo de esta última obra, en 1893, abrió la polémica entre populistas y marxistas en la prensa legal.

En su juventud, Lenin había formado parte de los

(1) Véase al principio de nuestro primer extracto cómo Lenin define el populismo. *(Red.)*

círculos populistas, pero pronto tomó la defensa calurosa del marxismo, criticó a los populistas en las reuniones y escribió, para combatirles, artículos y folletos. En 1894, basándose ya, como hará siempre, en datos estadísticos, publicó en tres fascículos su obra ¿Quiénes son los amigos del pueblo y cómo combaten a los socialdemócratas? *que suministra a todos los círculos marxistas armas terribles contra sus adversarios. Lenin, marxista revolucionario, no vacila en aliarse, contra los populistas, con los marxistas legales como Struve, que no son más que demócratas burgueses y a los cuales, sin embargo, no deja de combatir.*

En 1897-98, Lenin, deportado en Siberia, en el distrito de Minusinsk, escribió el artículo: ¿Qué herencia repudiamos? (1).

Mijailovsky había pretendido que los socialdemócratas, al atacar a los populistas, rompían con "la herencia" de 1860, es decir, con "las mejores tradiciones de la élite de la sociedad rusa" y que se convertían por esto en aliados de los reaccionarios de La Gaceta de Moscú. *Lenin afirmaba, en cambio, que los "discípulos rusos" (es decir, los marxistas, en el lenguaje de la época destinado a burlar la censura) consideran "la herencia" como progresiva, ya que va en el sentido de la evolución capitalista; lejos de repudiarla, la continúan. Son los populistas quienes "no tienen nada de común, con "la herencia", pues la han deformado en la práctica con sus quimeras reaccionarias.*

Lenin analizó en primer lugar los artículos del publicista Skaldin sobre La ciudad y los rincones perdidos *(publicados de 1867 a 1869) para demostrar que este liberal amigo del progreso no es menos encarnizado enemigo de los ídolos populistas tales como el* mir *(la comuna campesina). Los discípulos atacan no "la herencia", sino las adiciones románticas y pequeño-burguesas aportadas por los populistas. Este es el capítulo I.*

Lenin estudió luego las Cartas de la aldea *de Engelhardt que llegó a conclusiones populistas erróneas partiendo de premisas justas sacadas de su propia*

(1) Este trabajo fué escrito con destino a *Novoe Slovo*, cuando esta revista, sin que Lenin, que se hallaba en Siberia, se enterara a tiempo, había suspendido su publicación. Por este motivo «*¿Qué herencia repudiamos?*» apareció solamente en 1899, en el volumen «Estudios económicos y artículos» firmado *Vladimir Ilin*. (Red.)

práctica agrícola y coincidentes con "la herencia". Lenin subrayó así una vez más la oposición entre la tradición de 1860 y el populismo. Este es el capítulo II.

III

¿HA GANADO "LA HERENCIA" AL SER INCORPORADA AL POPULISMO?

—Pero, ¿qué entiende usted por populismo?—preguntará el lector...

—El populismo es un sistema de concepciones que se distingue por los tres rasgos siguientes: 1) *Apreciación del capitalismo en Rusia como un fenómeno de decadencia, de regresión. De ahí el deseo de "retener", de "detener" la dislocación por el capitalismo de los pilares seculares de Rusia, y otras lamentaciones reaccionarias. 2) Proclamación de la originalidad del régimen económico de Rusia en general, y del campesino con su comuna* (1), *su "artel"* (2), *etc., en particular.* El populismo no estima necesario aplicar a las relaciones económicas rusas la noción de las clases sociales y de sus conflictos, elaborada por la ciencia moderna; ve en la comuna campesina algo superior, mejor que el capitalismo; idealiza nuestros "pilares" (3) y niega o vela la existencia entre los campesinos de los antagonismos propios de toda economía mercantil y capitalista; niega la relación estrecha que

(1) Su característica es la propiedad colectiva del suelo. *(Red.)*

(2) *Artel*, asociación fundada con fines económicos, por el consentimiento expreso o tácito de sus miembros iguales en derechos, ligados por una responsabilidad colectiva y aportando su trabajo, o a la vez su trabajo y su capital. Esta forma de asociación remonta, en efecto, en Rusia, contrariamente a los países occidentales, a una remota antigüedad. El error de los populistas consistía en creer que esta forma de asociación hacía inútil o imposible el desenvolvimiento del capitalismo y conducía, con la comuna campesina, directamente al socialismo. *(Red.)*

(3) «Los viejos pilares de la vida económica popular», como dice Mijailovsky, que acusa a los marxistas de minarlos; es decir, la comuna, la asociación en *Artels* y el sentimiento religioso. *(Red.)*

of saying that "it would be a good thing if the doctor" (he was talking of the benefit of and need for doctors in the countryside. *V. I.*) "had a farm of his own, so that the muzhik could pay for the treatment with his labour" (p. 41). Comment is superfluous.

—All in all, comparing the above-enumerated good features of Engelhardt's outlook (i.e., those he has in common with the representatives of the "heritage" without any Narodnik tinge) with the bad (i.e., the Narodnik features) we have to admit that the former unquestionably predominate in the author of *Letters from the Countryside*, while the latter are an extraneous and accidental admixture, as it were, which has drifted in from without and is at odds with the general tone of his book.

III

HAS THE "HERITAGE" GAINED FROM ASSOCIATION WITH NARODISM?

"But what do you understand by Narodism?" the reader will probably ask. "The meaning attached to the concept 'heritage' was defined above, but no definition of the concept 'Narodism' has been given."

By Narodism we mean a system of views which comprises the following three features: 1) *Belief that capitalism in Russia represents a deterioration, a retrogression.* Hence the urge and desire to "retard," "halt," "stop the break-up" of the age-old foundations by capitalism, and similar reactionary cries. 2) *Belief in the exceptional character of the Russian economic system in general, and of the peasantry, with its village community, artel, etc., in particular.* It is not considered necessary to apply to Russian economic relationships the concepts elaborated by modern science concerning the different social classes and their conflicts. The village-community peasantry is regarded as something higher and

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is already overripe and spoiling, and he is compelled to go merely because, if he does not, the volost authorities will "take his pants down."

better than capitalism; there is a disposition to idealise the "foundations." The existence among the peasantry of contradictions characteristic of every commodity and capitalist economy is denied or slurred over; it is denied that any connection exists between these contradictions and their more developed form in capitalist industry and capitalist agriculture. 3) *Disregard of the connection between the "intelligentsia" and the country's legal and political institutions, on the one hand, and the material interests of definite social classes, on the other.* Denial of this connection, lack of a materialist explanation of these social factors, induces the belief that they represent a force capable of "dragging history along another line" (Mr. V. V.), of "diversion from the path" (Mr. N. —on, Mr. Yuzhakov, etc.), and so on.

That is what we mean by "Narodism." The reader will consequently see that we use this term in its broad sense, just as all the "Russian disciples" use it when opposing a whole system of views, and not individual representatives of this system. Among these individual representatives there are differences, of course, and sometimes important ones. Nobody ignores these differences. But the afore-mentioned views are common to all the most diverse representatives of Narodism, from—well, Mr. Yuzov, let us say, to Mr. Mikhailovsky. To these objectionable features of their views, the Yuzovs, Sazonovs, V. V., etc., add others, which are not shared, for instance, either by Mr. Mikhailovsky or by other contributors to the present-day *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. To deny these differences between the Narodniks in the narrow sense and the Narodniks in general would, of course, be wrong; but it would be wronger still to ignore the fact that the *fundamental* socio-economic views of all Narodniks coincide on the afore-mentioned major points. And since it is these fundamental views that the "Russian disciples" reject, and not only "deplorable deviations" from them in a worse direction, they are obviously fully entitled to employ the term "Narodism" in its wider meaning. Not only are they entitled to do so; they cannot do otherwise.

Turning to the fundamental views of Narodism outlined above, the first thing we must note is that the "heritage"

has absolutely no part in them. There are a whole number of undeniable representatives and guardians of the "heritage" who have nothing in common with Narodism, who do not pose the question of capitalism at all, who do not believe in the exceptional character of Russia, the peasant community, etc., and who do not regard the intelligentsia and our legal and political institutions as a factor capable of "diversion from the path." Above we named in illustration the editor and publisher of *Vestnik Yevropy*,[152] who might be accused of anything save violation of the traditions of the heritage. On the other hand, there are people whose views resemble the afore-mentioned fundamental principles of Narodism, yet who plainly and frankly "renounce the heritage"—we might mention, for example, the same Mr. Y. Abramov to whom Mr. Mikhailovsky refers, or Mr. Yuzov. The Narodism which the "Russian disciples" battle against did not even exist when the heritage was (to use a legal term) "bequeathed," that is, in the sixties. Germs, rudiments of Narodism existed, of course, not only in the sixties, but in the forties and even earlier*—but it is not the history of Narodism that concerns us here. We repeat, what is important for us is to establish that the "heritage" of the sixties, in the sense outlined above, has nothing in common with Narodism, i.e., that there is nothing in common in the substance of their views, that they pose different problems. There are guardians of the "heritage" who are not Narodniks, and there are Narodniks who "have renounced the heritage." Of course, there are also Narodniks who guard the "heritage," or who pretend to do so. That is why we speak of a connection between the heritage and Narodism. Let us see what has been the effect of this connection.

First, Narodism made a big *step forward* compared with the heritage *by posing* for the attention of society problems which the guardians of the heritage were partly (in their time) not yet able to pose, or partly did not, and do not, pose because of their inherent narrowness of outlook. In *posing* these problems the Narodniks performed a great *historical* service, and it is quite natural and understanda-

* Cf. Tugan-Baranovsky's *The Russian Factory* (St. Petersburg, 1898).

ble, that, having offered a solution (whatever it may be worth) for these problems, Narodism *thereby* occupied a foremost place among the progressive trends of Russian social thought.

But the solution of these problems proposed by Narodism proved to be worthless, to be based on backward theories, long ago discarded in Western Europe, on a romantic and petty-bourgeois criticism of capitalism, on a disregard for the cardinal facts of Russian history and reality. So long as the development of capitalism in Russia and of its inherent contradictions was still very weak, this primitive criticism of capitalism could hold its ground. But Narodism is absolutely incapable of measuring up to the contemporary development of capitalism in Russia, the contemporary state of our knowledge of Russian economic history and reality, the contemporary demands made on sociological theory. Once progressive, as the first to pose the problem of capitalism, nowadays Narodism is a *reactionary* and *harmful* theory which misleads social thought and plays into the hands of stagnation and Asiatic backwardness. Today the reactionary character of its criticism of capitalism has even lent Narodism features; that make it *inferior* to the outlook which confines itself to faithful guardianship of the heritage.* That this is so we shall now endeavour to prove by analysing each of the three basic features of the Narodnik outlook mentioned above.

The first feature—the belief that in Russia capitalism represents a deterioration, a retrogression. Very soon after the problem of capitalism in Russia had been posed, it became clear that our economic development was capitalistic, and the Narodniks proclaimed this development a retrogression, a mistake, a deviation from the path supposedly prescribed by the whole history of the nation's life, from the path supposedly hallowed by age-old foundations, and so on and so forth. The enlighteners' ardent faith in this course of social development was replaced by distrust

* I have already had occasion to remark above in the article on economic romanticism that our opponents display remarkable short-sightedness in regarding the terms *reactionary* and *petty-bourgeois* as polemical abuse, when they have a perfectly definite historico-philosophical meaning. (See p. 217 of the present volume.—*Ed.*)

of it; historical optimism and cheerfulness were replaced by pessimism and dejection founded on the fact that the farther matters proceeded as they were proceeding, the harder and more difficult would it be to solve the problems raised by the new development; appeals were made to "retard" and "halt" this development; the theory was advanced that Russia's backwardness was her good fortune, and so forth. All these features of the Narodnik outlook, far from having anything in common with the "heritage," flatly contradict it. The belief that Russian capitalism represents a "deviation from the path," a deterioration, etc., leads to a misrepresentation of Russia's whole economic evolution, to a misrepresentation of that "change-over" which is taking place before our eyes. Carried away by their desire to retard and stop the break-up of the age-old foundations by capitalism, the Narodniks display an amazing lack of historical tact, they forget that *antecedent* to this capitalism there was nothing but the same exploitation combined with countless forms of bondage and personal dependence, which burdened the position of the labourer, nothing but routine and stagnation in social production and, hence, in all spheres of social life. Contending against capitalism from their romantic, petty-bourgeois angle, the Narodniks throw all historical realism overboard and always compare the *reality* of capitalism with a *fiction* of the pre-capitalist order. The "heritage" of the sixties with their ardent faith in the progressive character of the existing course of social development, their relentless enmity directed wholly and exclusively against the relics of the past, their conviction that these relics had only to be swept clean away and everything would go splendidly—this "heritage," far from having any part in the aforementioned views of Narodism, runs directly counter to them.

The second feature of Narodism is belief in Russia's exceptionalism, idealisation of the peasantry, the village community, etc. The doctrine of Russia's exceptionalism induced the Narodniks to seize upon out-dated West-European theories, prompted them to regard many of the achievements of West-European culture with amazing levity: the Narodniks reassured themselves with the thought that, if we lacked some of the features of civilised humanity, "we are

destined," on the other hand, to show the world new modes of economy, etc. Not only was the analysis of capitalism and all its manifestations given by progressive West-European thought not accepted in relation to Holy Russia; every effort was made to invent excuses for not drawing the same conclusions about Russian capitalism as were made regarding European capitalism. The Narodniks bowed and scraped to the authors of this analysis and calmly continued to remain romanticists of the same sort as these authors had all their lives contended against. Again, this doctrine of Russia's exceptionalism, which is shared by all the Narodniks, far from having anything in common with the "heritage," runs directly counter to it. The "sixties," on the contrary, desired to Europeanise Russia, believed that she should adopt the general European culture, were concerned to have the institutions of this culture transferred to our anything but exceptional soil. Any doctrine that teaches that Russia is exceptional is completely at variance with the spirit and the tradition of the sixties. Even more at variance with this tradition is Narodism's idealisation and over-embellishment of the countryside. This false idealisation, which desired at all costs to see something specific in our rural system, something quite unlike the rural system in every other country in the period of pre-capitalist relations, is in naked contradiction to the traditions of the sober and realistic heritage. The wider and more deeply capitalism developed, the more distinctly did the countryside display the contradictions common to every commodity-capitalist society, the more and more glaringly did the antithesis stand out between the Narodniks' honeyed talk about the peasant's "community spirit," "artel spirit," etc., on the one hand, and the actual division of the peasantry into a rural bourgeoisie and a rural proletariat on the other; and the more rapidly did the Narodniks, who continued to look upon things with the eyes of the peasant, change from sentimental romanticists into ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, because in modern society the small producer changes into a commodity producer. Their false idealisation of the countryside and romantic dreams about the "community spirit" led the Narodniks to adopt an extremely frivolous attitude towards the peas-

ants' real needs arising from the existing course of economic development. In theory one might talk to one's heart's content about the strength of the foundations, but in practice every Narodnik sensed very well that the elimination of the relics of the past, the survivals of the pre-Reform system, which to this day bind our peasantry from head to foot, would open the way to precisely the capitalist course of development, and no other. Better stagnation than capitalist progress—this, essentially, is every Narodnik's attitude to the countryside, although of course not every Narodnik would venture to say so frankly and bluntly, with the naïve forthrightness of a Mr. V. V. "Tied to their allotments and communities, and unable to apply their labour where it would be more productive and of greater advantage to themselves, the peasants are, as it were, frozen in that congested, herd-like, unproductive form of life in which they emerged from serfdom." That is how one of the representatives of the "heritage" saw it from his characteristic "enlightener's" standpoint.[153] "Better that the peasants remain frozen in their routine, patriarchal form of life, than clear the way for capitalism in the countryside"—that, essentially, is how every Narodnik sees it. Indeed, probably not a single Narodnik would venture to deny that social-estate exclusiveness of the peasant community, with its collective responsibility and its ban on the sale of land and on the right to refuse an allotment, stands in the sharpest contradiction to contemporary economic *realities*, to contemporary commodity-capitalist relations and their development. To deny this contradiction is impossible, but the whole point is that the Narodniks are mortally afraid of this presentation of the question, of this contrasting of the legal status of the peasantry with economic realities and the present course of economic development. The Narodnik is stubbornly determined to believe in a non-existent non-capitalist development which is a figment of his romantic imagination, and therefore ... and therefore he is prepared to retard the present development, which is proceeding along capitalist lines. The Narodnik's attitude to such problems as the social-estate exclusiveness of the peasant community, collective responsibility, and the peasant's right to sell and give up his allotment, is not only one of extreme caution

and fear for the fate of the "foundations" (the foundations of routine and stagnation); more than this, the Narodnik falls so low that he even welcomes the police rule forbidding the peasants to sell land. To such a Narodnik, one might retort in the words of Engelhardt: "The muzhik is stupid, he cannot manage his own affairs. If nobody looks after him, he will burn down all the forests, kill off all the birds, denude the rivers of fish, ruin the land and himself die out." Here the Narodnik quite definitely "renounces the heritage," becomes a reactionary. And note that with the progress of economic development, this destruction of the social-estate exclusiveness of the peasant community increasingly becomes an imperative necessity for the rural proletariat, while the inconveniences arising therefrom for the peasant bourgeoisie are not at all considerable. The "enterprising muzhik" may easily rent land on the side, open an establishment in some other village, and travel on business wherever he likes and whenever he likes. But for the "peasant" who lives chiefly from the sale of his labour-power, being tied to his allotment and community is an enormous restriction on his economic activity, makes it impossible for him to find a better employer, and compels him to sell his labour-power only to local purchasers, who invariably pay less and seek all sorts of ways and means of reducing him to bondage. Having surrendered to the sway of romantic dreaming and set himself the aim of maintaining and preserving the foundations despite the course of economic development, the Narodnik, without himself observing it, had slipped down this inclined plane until he found himself side by side with the agrarian, who yearns with all his heart and soul for the preservation and consolidation of the "peasant's tie with the land." It is worth recalling, for example, that this social-estate exclusiveness of the peasant community has bred specific methods of hiring workers: factory and farm owners send out agents to the villages, especially those heavily in arrears, to hire labourers on the most advantageous terms. Fortunately, the development of agricultural capitalism, by breaking down the "settled state" of the proletarian (such is the effect of the so-called agricultural outside employments), is gradually substituting free hire for this form of bondage.

Another, and perhaps no less striking corroboration of our contention that the present-day Narodnik theories are pernicious, is to be found in the common tendency among the Narodniks to *idealise labour services*. We have already given an example of how Engelhardt, consummating his Narodnik fall from grace, went so far as to say that "it would be a good thing" to develop labour services in the countryside! We find the same thing in Mr. Yuzhakov's famous project for agricultural gymnasia (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1895, No. 5).* In serious economic articles in the same journal, a fellow contributor of Engelhardt's, Mr. V. V., indulged in similar idealisation when he declared that the peasant had scored a victory over the landlord, who had supposedly wanted to introduce capitalism; but the whole trouble was that the peasant undertook to cultivate the landlord's land in return for land received from him "on lease"—in other words, was restoring the very same mode of economy as existed under serfdom. These are some of the most glaring illustrations of the Narodniks' reactionary attitude to problems concerning our agriculture. In less glaring form, you will find this idea advocated by every Narodnik. Every Narodnik says that capitalism in our agriculture is pernicious and dangerous, because capitalism, you see, substitutes the farm labourer for the independent peasant. The *reality* of capitalism (the "farm labourer") is contrasted to the *fiction* of the "independent" peasant: and this fiction is based on the peasant ownership of means of production in the pre-capitalist era, the fact being modestly ignored that the peasant has to pay double their value for these means of production; that these means of production serve for the performance of labour service; that the living standard of this "independent" peasant is so low that in any capitalist country he would be classed as a pauper; and that added to the hopeless poverty and intellectual inertness of this "independent" peasant is the personal dependence that inevitably accompanies pre-capitalist forms of economy.

The third characteristic feature of Narodism—disregard of the connection between the "intelligentsia" and the

* See pp. 73-80 and 459-89 of the present volume.—*Ed.*

country's legal and political institutions, on the one hand, and the material interests of definite social classes, on the other—is bound up indissolubly with the previous ones: only this unrealistic attitude to sociological problems could have bred the doctrine that Russian capitalism is a "mistake," and that "diversion from the path" is possible. This Narodnik view, too, bears no relation to the "heritage" and traditions of the sixties; on the contrary, it *runs directly counter to these traditions*. A natural corollary to this view is the Narodniks' attitude to the numerous survivals of the pre-Reform reglementation of Russian life, an attitude which the representatives of the "heritage" could not possibly have shared. To illustrate this attitude, we shall take the liberty of borrowing the excellent remarks of Mr. V. Ivanov in his article "A Shabby Fabrication" (*Novoye Slovo*, September 1897). The author refers to Mr. Boborykin's novel *A Different Way*, and exposes his misconception of the dispute between the Narodniks and the "disciples." Mr. Boborykin makes his hero, a Narodnik, reproach the "disciples" for supposedly dreaming of "a barrack regime with the intolerable despotism of reglementation." Mr. V. Ivanov observes in this connection that:

"Far from saying that the 'dream' of their opponents was the intolerable despotism of 'reglementation,' they" (the Narodniks) "*cannot and will not say so as long as they remain Narodniks*. The substance of their dispute with the 'economic materialists' *in this respect* is that, in the opinion of the Narodniks, the remaining survivals of the old reglementation may serve as the basis for its further development. The intolerableness of the old reglementation is veiled from their eyes, on the one hand, by their conviction that the very 'peasant soul (single and indivisible) is evolving' towards reglementation, and, on the other, by their belief in the existing or coming moral beauty of the 'intelligentsia,' 'society,' or the 'leading classes' generally. They accuse the economic materialists of being infatuated not with 'reglementation,' but, on the contrary, with the West-European system, which is based on freedom from reglementation. And the economic materialists really do assert that the survivals of the old reglementation, which

sprang from a natural form of economy, are daily becoming more 'intolerable' in a country that has passed over to a money economy, entailing countless changes both in the actual status and in the mental and moral complexion of the various sections of its population. They are therefore convinced that the conditions necessary for the rise of a new and beneficial 'reglementation' of the country's economic life cannot develop out of the survivals of a reglementation which was adapted to a natural economy and serfdom, and can only evolve in such an atmosphere of wide and comprehensive freedom from the old reglementation as exists in the advanced countries of Western Europe and America. That is how matters stand with the question of 'reglementation' in the dispute between the Narodniks and their opponents" (pp. 11-12, loc. cit.). This attitude of the Narodniks to "the survivals of the old reglementation is, perhaps, their most flagrant departure from the traditions of the "heritage." The representatives of this heritage were, as we have seen, distinguished by their ineradicable and fierce aversion for every survival of the old reglementation. Consequently, in this respect the "disciples" are incomparably closer to the "traditions" and "heritage" of the sixties than the Narodniks are.

In addition to the highly important error of the Narodniks mentioned above, their lack of sociological realism impels them to a specific manner of thinking and reasoning about social affairs and problems which might be called narrow intellectual self-conceit or, perhaps, the bureaucratic mentality. The Narodnik is always dilating on the path "we" should choose for our country, the misfortunes that would arise if "we" directed the country along such-and-such a path, the prospects "we" could ensure ourselves if we avoided the dangers of the path old Europe has taken, if we "take what is good" both from Europe and from our ancient village-community system, and so on and so forth. Hence the Narodnik's complete distrust and contempt for the independent trends of the various social classes which are shaping history in accordance with their own interests. Hence the amazing levity with which the Narodnik (forgetting the conditions surrounding him) advances all sorts of social projects, from the "organisation of agricultural

labour" to the "communalisation of production" through the good offices of our "society." "Mit der Gründlichkeit der geschichtlichen Action wird also der Umfang der Masse zunehmen, deren Action sie ist"*—these words express one of the profoundest and most important precepts of that historico-philosophical theory which our Narodniks will not and cannot understand. As man's history-making activity grows broader and deeper, the size of that mass of the population which is the conscious maker of history is bound to increase. The Narodnik, however, always regarded the population in general, and the working population in particular, as the object of this or that more or less sensible measure, as something to be directed along this or that path, and never regarded the various classes of the population as independent history-makers on the existing path, never asked which conditions of the present path might stimulate (or, on the contrary, paralyse) the independent and conscious activity of these history-makers.

And so, although Narodism, by *posing* the question of capitalism in Russia, made a big step forward compared with the "heritage" of the enlighteners, the *solution* of the question it offered has proved so unsatisfactory, because of its petty-bourgeois outlook and sentimental criticism of capitalism, that on a number of cardinal questions of social life it *lags behind* the "enlighteners." Narodism's association with the heritage and traditions of our enlighteners has proved in the end to be a *drawback*: the new questions with which Russian social thought has been confronted by Russia's post-Reform economic development, Narodism has not solved, confining itself to sentimental and reactionary lamentations over them; while Narodnik romanticism has obscured the old questions already posed by the enlighteners, thus retarding their full solution.

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* Marx, *Die heilige Familie*, p. 120. Quoted from Beltov, p. 235. ("With the thoroughness of the historical action, the size of the mass whose action it is will therefore increase." Marx, *The Holy Family*.[154]—*Ed.*)

IV

THE "ENLIGHTENERS," THE NARODNIKS, AND THE "DISCIPLES"

We may now sum up the results of our comparisons. Let us endeavour to give a brief description of the relationship in which each of the trends of social thought enumerated in the sub-title stands to the others.

The enlightener believes in the present course of social development, because he fails to observe its inherent contradictions. The Narodnik fears the present course of social development, because he is already aware of these contradictions. The "disciple" believes in the present course of social development, because he sees the only earnest of a better future in the full development of these contradictions. The first and last trends therefore strive to support, accelerate, facilitate development along the present path, to remove all obstacles which hamper this development and retard it. Narodism, on the contrary, strives to retard and halt this development, is afraid of abolishing certain obstacles to the development of capitalism. The first and last trends are distinguished by what may be called historical optimism: the farther and the quicker things go as they are, the better it will be. Narodism, on the contrary, naturally tends to historical pessimism: the farther things go as they are, the worse it will be. The "enlighteners" never posed questions concerning the character of post-Reform development and confined themselves exclusively to warring against the survivals of the pre-Reform system, to the negative task of clearing the way for a European type of development in Russia. Narodism posed the question of capitalism in Russia, but answered it in the sense that capitalism is reactionary, and therefore could not wholly accept the heritage of the enlighteners: the Narodniks always warred against people who in general strove to Europeanise Russia from the standpoint of a "single civilisation"; warred against them not only because they, the Narodniks, could not confine themselves to these people's ideals (such a war would have been just), but because they did not want to go so far in the development of this, i.e., capitalist, civilisation. The "dis-

ciples" answer the question of capitalism in Russia in the sense that it is progressive, and they therefore not only can, but must, accept the heritage of the enlighteners in its entirety, supplementing it with an analysis of the contradictions of capitalism from the standpoint of the propertyless producers. The enlighteners did not single out any one class of the population for special attention; they not only spoke of the people in general, but even of the nation in general. The Narodniks were desirous of representing the interests of labour, but they did not point to any definite groups in the contemporary economic system; actually, they always took the standpoint of the small producer, whom capitalism converts into a commodity producer. The "disciples" not only take the interests of labour as their criterion, but in doing so point to quite definite economic groups in the capitalist economy, namely, the propertyless producers. By the nature of their aims, the first and last trends correspond to the interests of the classes which are created and developed by capitalism; Narodism, by its nature, corresponds to the interests of the class of small producers, the petty bourgeoisie, which occupies an intermediate position among the classes of contemporary society. Consequently, Narodism's contradictory attitude to the "heritage" is not accidental, but is a necessary result of the very nature of the Narodnik views: we have seen that one of the basic features of the enlighteners' views was the ardent desire to Europeanise Russia, but the Narodniks cannot possibly share this desire fully without ceasing to be Narodniks.

We have in the end arrived at the conclusion which we have repeatedly indicated above in particular instances, namely, that the *disciples are much more consistent and faithful guardians of the heritage than the Narodniks*. Far from renouncing the heritage, they consider it one of their principal duties to refute the romantic and petty-bourgeois fears which induce the Narodniks on very many and very important points to reject the European ideals of the enlighteners. But it goes without saying that the "disciples" do not guard the heritage in the way an archivist guards an old document. Guarding the heritage does not mean confining oneself to the heritage, and the "disciples" add to their defence

of the general ideals of Europeanism an analysis of the contradictions implicit in our capitalist development, and an assessment of this development from the specific standpoint indicated above.

V

MR. MIKHAILOVSKY ON THE "DISCIPLES'" RENUNCIATION OF THE HERITAGE

Let us, in conclusion, return to Mr. Mikhailovsky and examine his statements on the subject under consideration. Not only does Mr. Mikhailovsky declare that these people (the disciples) "do not acknowledge any continuity with the past and emphatically renounce the heritage" (loc. cit., 179); he also affirms that "they" (together with other persons of the most diverse trends, up to and including Mr. Abramov, Mr. Volynsky and Mr. Rozanov) "hurl themselves against the heritage with the greatest fury" (180). To which heritage is Mr. Mikhailovsky referring? To the heritage of the sixties and seventies, the heritage which *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* solemnly renounced and renounces (178).

We have already said that if it is a question of the "heritage" that has fallen to the people of today, then one must distinguish between *two heritages*: one is the heritage of the enlighteners in general, of the people who were absolutely hostile to the whole pre-Reform order, who stood for European ideals and for the interests of the broad mass of the population. The other heritage is Narodism. We have already shown that to confuse these two different things would be a gross error, for everyone knows that there have been, and still are, people who guard the "traditions of the sixties" but have nothing in common with Narodism. All Mr. Mikhailovsky's observations are founded wholly and exclusively upon a confusion of these totally different heritages. And since Mr. Mikhailovsky must be aware of this difference, his sally is not only absurd, but definitely slanderous. Did *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* hurl itself against Narodism specifically? Not at all: it hurled itself no less, if not more, against the enlighteners in general, and

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En un último capítulo, Lenin declara que Mijailovsky no tiene ningún derecho a acusar a los socialdemócratas de atacar "la herencia" de 1860, puesto que, por el contrario, estos reprochan a los populistas el no haber sabido resolver en el espíritu de esta "herencia" los problemas nuevos surgidos después de la reforma.

Lenin vuelve aún a hacer la crítica del populismo en una gran obra, fuertemente documentada: El desenvolvimiento del capitalismo en Rusia, escrita igualmente durante su deportación en Siberia y publicada en San Petersburgo en abril de 1899.

Después de lo cual abandona a este adversario ya reducido a la impotencia y desmentido prácticamente por los progresos del capitalismo en Rusia (2.098.000 obreros industriales en 1898) y por la agitación obrera (500.000 huelguistas de 1894 a 1899) y se consagra por entero a la constitución de un verdadero partido socialdemócrata.

II

CONTRA LOS ECONOMISTAS

LOS OBJETIVOS ESENCIALES DE NUESTRO MOVIMIENTO [1]

(*Iskra*, núm. 1, diciembre de 1920)

El primer Programa de los socialdemócratas rusos *fué lanzado en* 1884 *por el grupo* Liberación del Trabajo, *cuyos principales inspiradores eran Plejánov y Axelrod, establecidos, desde hacia ya varios años, en el extranjero. Este grupo contribuye grandemente a la formación de un estado mayor de intelectuales socialdemócratas.*

La gran sequia de 1891, *que determinó una miseria espantosa, y la necesidad de pasar a la acción que se suscitó entre las clases instruidas, empujaron a estos intelectuales a aproximarse al movimiento obrero creciente: en este periodo se multiplican los* círculos *en que, bajo la direccion de intelectuales, algunos obreros avanzados estudian el marxismo.*

Pero pronto las exigencias de la lucha obligaron a los círculos a agruparse, por regiones, en Ligas. *La más importante fué la* Liga peterburguesa para la lucha por la liberación de la clase obrera, *fundada en* 1895 *con la participación de Lenin. Todo el* grupo central de organización, *que estaba a su cabeza, fué detenido a fines del mismo año y deportado a la Siberia, pero la Liga continuó funcionando. En el curso de los años siguientes encontramos Ligas análogas en Moscú, Kiev, Iekaterinoslav, Nicolaev, etc.*

La necesidad de una conexión nacional entre las

(1) *Obras completas*, segunda edición rusa, t. IV, páginas 54-59. (*Red.*)

organizaciones socialdemócratas de Rusia se hacía cada día más evidente. Venciendo grandes dificultades, los representantes de las Ligas de San Petersburgo, Moscú, Kiev, Iekaterinoslav y los del Bund israelita en formación en las provincias del Oeste (Lituania y Polonia) se reunieron el 1.° de marzo de 1898 en Minsk. Este Congreso fundió las diversas Ligas en un partido dirigido por un Comité central, y decidió hacer de la Gaceta Obrera, publicada en Kiev, el órgano central del Partido. Por esta razón se considera a este Congreso como el primero del Partido obrero socialdemócrata de Rusia.

La detención de la mayor parte de los miembros del Congreso no permitió poner en práctica sus resoluciones. Por otra parte, no se había adoptado ningún programa, y continuó reinando la mayor confusión con respecto a la doctrina y a la táctica. De una parte, ciertos socialdemócratas concedían una importancia casi exclusiva a la lucha económica de la clase obrera, dejando para más tarde las reivindicaciones políticas esenciales. Desinteresándose de todo lo que no fuese el duelo económico entre el Capital y el Trabajo, pasaban al lado del movimiento universitario, del movimiento campesino, del movimiento liberal de los zemstvos (*municipalidades rurales*) y llegaban prácticamente a aislar el partido obrero del gran movimiento antiabsolutista. En San Petersburgo representaba esta tendencia el periódico Rabochaia Misl (*El Pensamiento Obrero*), que había comenzado a aparecer en 1897 y oponía netamente la lucha profesional de los obreros, como movimiento específico de clase, a la lucha política contra la autocracia, movimiento de toda la democracia en general.

El economismo, como se llamó a esta tendencia, se vió fortalecido por la publicación, en junio de 1897, después de grandes movimientos de huelga, y tuvo éxito no solamente en Rusia, sino también en el grupo de los socialdemócratas rusos emigrados, que se dividió.

De otra parte, ciertos intelectuales burgueses que

habían adherido al marxismo porque veían en la clase obrera la fuerza principal destinada a derribar el antiguo régimen político, estimaban que el objetivo principal del movimiento debía ser político, más que social. Más bien enemigos de la autocracia, que dificultaba los progresos de la burguesía, que partidarios del socialismo, destinado a suceder al capitalismo, se mostraban dispuestos a adoptar la teoría que justificase sus tendencias. Eran lo que se llamaba los marxistas legales, y la aparición en la socialdemocracia alemana de la teoría de Bernstein (1), que revisaba el marxismo en el sentido antirrevolucionario de las reformas y de la colaboración de clases, les reforzó considerablemente. Sus jefes eran Struve, Bulgákov y Tugan-Baranovsky. Evolucionando rápidamente en el mismo sentido, formaron pronto, en 1901-1902, con el grupo Liberación, el núcleo del partido burgués constitucional demócrata (Cadete).

En fin, en 1899, se puso en circulación un documento, que estuvo a punto de establecer una suerte de alianza entre el economismo y el reformismo a lo Bernstein, y que era obra de E. Kuskova, miembro del grupo de los socialdemócratas rusos en el extranjero. Su tesis general era ésta: para los obreros, la lucha por las mejoras económicas parciales; para las clases poseyentes, la lucha por la libertad política. Urgía, pues, unificar la socialdemocracia alrededor de un programa preciso y de una organización firme. Lenin se ocupó ya de esto en Siberia: desde fines de 1897 había redactado una exposición de los objetivos prácticos de la socialdemocracia y había hecho adoptar por un grupo de 17 de sus amigos una resolución de protesta contra el Credo. Al volver del destierro, en 1900, se consagró, con Mártov y Potresov, a la obra de constituir verdaderamente este partido socialdemócrata que no existía más que de un modo formal desde el Congreso de 1898.

(1) Su libro *Las premisas del socialismo y los objetivos de la socialdemocracia* no apareció hasta 1899, pero su teoría era ya conocida antes por sus artículos. *(Red.)*

El movimiento obrero, inactivo durante un momento, resurgía con una fuerza nueva y comprendía mejor la necesidad de la lucha política desde que las leyes de 1897 eran frecuentemente violadas por los patronos con la ayuda del gobierno. El movimiento de los estudiantes saturaba de su atmósfera revolucionaria incluso a una fracción de las clases poseyentes. La situación era, pues, eminentemente favorable para la fundación de un partido obrero revolucionario que combatiese a la vez por el socialismo y por el derrumbamiento de la autocracia.

Lo primero que hacía falta era tener un periódico, como centro de doctrina y de dirección. Como las persecuciones policíacas hacían prácticamente imposible la aparición regular de un órgano periodístico en Rusia, Lenin se trasladó al extranjero y negoció con el grupo, La Liberación del Trabajo, *es decir, con Plejánov, Vera Zasulitch y Axelrod, la fundación de Iskra* (1).

El periódico fué instalado en Munich, gracias al concurso de los socialdemócratas alemanes, y el primer número apareció el 21 de diciembre de 1900 (3 *de enero de* 1901). *El texto que sigue es el artículo de fondo de ese primer número.*

* * *

La socialdemocracia rusa ha declarado más de una vez que el objetivo inmediato del partido obrero ruso debe ser el derrumbamiento de la autocracia y la conquista de la libertad política. Sus portavoces, los miembros del grupo *La Liberación del Trabajo*, lo habían dicho ya hace más de quince años (2); los representantes de las organizaciones socialdemocratas que han formado en la primavera de 1898 el partido social-

(1) *Iskra* significa *La Chispa*. El periódico llevaba este epígrafe tomado de la respuesta de los decembristas a Puchkin: «De la chispa surgirá la llama». *(Red.)*

(2) En su programa, publicado en 1884. *(Red.)*

THE URGENT TASKS OF OUR MOVEMENT

Russian Social-Democracy has repeatedly declared the immediate political task of a Russian working-class party to be the overthrow of the autocracy, the achievement of political liberty. This was enunciated over fifteen years ago by the representatives of Russian Social-Democracy—the members of the Emancipation of Labour group. It was affirmed two and a half years ago by the representatives of the Russian Social-Democratic organisations that, in the spring of 1898, founded the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. Despite these repeated declarations, however, the question of the political tasks of Social-Democracy in Russia is prominent again today. Many representatives of our movement express doubt as to the correctness of the above-mentioned solution of the question. It is claimed that the economic struggle is of predominant importance; the political tasks of the proletariat are pushed into the background, narrowed down, and restricted, and it is even said that to speak of forming an independent working-class party in Russia is merely to repeat somebody else's words, that the workers should carry on only the economic struggle and leave politics to the intelligentsia in alliance with the liberals. The latest profession of the new faith (the notorious *Credo*) amounts to a declaration that the Russian proletariat has not yet come of age and to a complete rejection of the Social-Democratic programme. *Rabochaya Mysl* (particularly in its *Separate Supplement*) takes practically the same attitude. Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a period of vacillation and doubt border-

ing on self-negation. On the one hand, the working-class movement is being sundered from socialism, the workers are being helped to carry on the economic struggle, but nothing, or next to nothing, is done to explain to them the socialist aims and the political tasks of the movement as a whole. On the other hand, socialism is being sundered from the labour movement; Russian socialists are again beginning to talk more and more about the struggle against the government having to be carried on entirely by the intelligentsia because the workers confine themselves to the economic struggle.

In our opinion the ground has been prepared for this sad state of affairs by three circumstances. First, in their early activity, Russian Social-Democrats restricted themselves merely to work in propaganda circles. When we took up agitation among the masses we were not always able to restrain ourselves from going to the other extreme. Secondly, in our early activity we often had to struggle for our right to existence against the Narodnaya Volya adherents, who understood by "politics" an activity isolated from the working-class movement and who reduced politics purely to conspiratorial struggle. In rejecting this sort of politics, the Social-Democrats went to the extreme of pushing politics entirely into the background. Thirdly, working in the isolation of small local workers' circles, the Social-Democrats did not devote sufficient attention to the necessity of organising a revolutionary party which would combine all the activities of the local groups and make it possible to organise the revolutionary work on correct lines. The predominance of isolated work is naturally connected with the predominance of the economic struggle.

These circumstances resulted in concentration on one side of the movement only. The "economist" trend (that is, if we can speak of it as a "trend") has attempted to elevate this narrowness to the rank of a special theory and has tried to utilise for this purpose the fashionable Bernsteinism and the fashionable "criticism of Marxism," which peddles old bourgeois ideas under a new label. These attempts alone have given rise to the danger of a weakening of connection between the Russian working-class movement and Russian Social-Democracy, the vanguard in the struggle for

political liberty. The most urgent task of our movement is to strengthen this connection.

Social-Democracy is the combination of the working-class movement and socialism. Its task is not to serve the working-class movement passively at each of its separate stages, but to represent the interests of the movement as a whole, to point out to this movement its ultimate aim and its political tasks, and to safeguard its political and ideological independence. Isolated from Social-Democracy, the working-class movement becomes petty and inevitably becomes bourgeois. In waging only the economic struggle, the working class loses its political independence; it becomes the tail of other parties and betrays the great principle: "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by, the working classes themselves."[137] In every country there has been a period in which the working-class movement existed apart from socialism, each going its own way; and in every country this isolation has weakened both socialism and the working-class movement. Only the fusion of socialism with the working-class movement has in all countries created a durable basis for both. But in every country this combination of socialism and the working-class movement was evolved historically, in unique ways, in accordance with the prevailing conditions of time and place. In Russia, the necessity for combining socialism and the working-class movement was in theory long ago proclaimed, but it is only now being carried into practice. It is a very difficult process and there is, therefore, nothing surprising in the fact that it is accompanied by vacillations and doubts.

What lesson can be learned from the past?

The entire history of Russian socialism has led to the condition in which the most urgent task is the struggle against the autocratic government and the achievement of political liberty. Our socialist movement concentrated itself, so to speak, upon the struggle against the autocracy. On the other hand, history has shown that the isolation of socialist thought from the vanguard of the working classes is greater in Russia than in other countries, and that if this state of affairs continues, the revolutionary movement in Russia is doomed to impotence. From this condition emerges the task which the Russian Social-Democracy is

called upon to fulfil—to imbue the masses of the proletariat with the ideas of socialism and political consciousness, and to organise a revolutionary party inseparably connected with the spontaneous working-class movement. Russian Social-Democracy has done much in this direction, but much more still remains to be done. With the growth of the movement, the field of activity for Social-Democrats becomes wider; the work becomes more varied, and an increasing number of activists in the movement will concentrate their efforts upon the fulfilment of various special tasks which the daily needs of propaganda and agitation bring to the fore. This phenomenon is quite natural and is inevitable, but it causes us to be particularly concerned with preventing these special activities and methods of struggle from becoming ends in themselves and with preventing preparatory work from being regarded as the main and sole activity.

Our principal and fundamental task is to facilitate the political development and the political organisation of the working class. Those who push this task into the background, who refuse to subordinate to it all the special tasks and particular methods of struggle, are following a false path and causing serious harm to the movement. And it is being pushed into the background, firstly, by those who call upon revolutionaries to employ only the forces of isolated conspiratorial circles cut off from the working-class movement in the struggle against the government. It is being pushed into the background, secondly, by those who restrict the content and scope of political propaganda, agitation, and organisation; who think it fit and proper to treat the workers to "politics" only at exceptional moments in their lives, only on festive occasions; who too solicitously substitute demands for partial concessions from the autocracy for the political struggle against the autocracy; and who do not go to sufficient lengths to ensure that these demands for partial concessions are raised to the status of a systematic, implacable struggle of a revolutionary, working-class party against the autocracy.

"Organise!" *Rabochaya Mysl* keeps repeating to the workers in all keys, and all the adherents of the "economist" trend echo the cry. We, of course, wholly endorse this

appeal, but we will not fail to add: organise, but not only in mutual benefit societies, strike funds, and workers' circles; organise also in a political party; organise for the determined struggle against the autocratic government and against the whole of capitalist society. Without such organisation the proletariat will never rise to the class-conscious struggle; without such organisation the working-class movement is doomed to impotency. With the aid of nothing but funds and study circles and mutual benefit societies the working class will never be able to fulfil its great historical mission—to emancipate itself and the whole of the Russian people from political and economic slavery. Not a single class in history has achieved power without producing its political leaders, its prominent representatives able to organise a movement and lead it. And the Russian working class has already shown that it can produce such men and women. The struggle which has developed so widely during the past five or six years has revealed the great potential revolutionary power of the working class; it has shown that the most ruthless government persecution does not diminish, but, on the contrary, increases the number of workers who strive towards socialism, towards political consciousness, and towards the political struggle. The congress which our comrades held in 1898 correctly defined our tasks and did not merely repeat other people's words, did not merely express the enthusiasm of "intellectuals."... We must set to work resolutely to fulfil these tasks, placing the question of the Party's programme, organisation, and tactics on the order of the day. We have already set forth our views on the fundamental postulates of our programme, and, of course, this is not the place to develop them in detail. We propose to devote a series of articles in forthcoming issues to questions of organisation, which are among the most burning problems confronting us. In this respect we lag considerably behind the old workers in the Russian revolutionary movement. We must frankly admit this defect and exert all our efforts to devise methods of greater secrecy in our work, to propagate systematically the proper methods of work, the proper methods of deluding the gendarmes and of evading the snares of the police. We must train people who will devote the whole of

their lives, not only their spare evenings, to the revolution; we must build up an organisation large enough to permit the introduction of a strict division of labour in the various forms of our work. Finally, with regard to questions of tactics, we shall confine ourselves to the following: Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to some one preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognises all methods of struggle, provided they correspond to the forces at the disposal of the Party and facilitate the achievement of the best results possible under the given conditions. If we have a strongly organised party, a single strike may turn into a political demonstration, into a political victory over the government. If we have a strongly organised party, a revolt in a single locality may grow into a victorious revolution. We must bear in mind that the struggles with the government for partial demands and the gain of certain concessions are merely light skirmishes with the enemy, encounters between outposts, whereas the decisive battle is still to come. Before us, in all its strength, towers the enemy fortress which is raining shot and shell upon us, mowing down our best fighters. We must capture this fortress, and we will capture it, if we unite all the forces of the awakening proletariat with all the forces of the Russian revolutionaries into one party which will attract all that is vital and honest in Russia. Only then will the great prophecy of the Russian worker-revolutionary, Pyotr Alexeyev, be fulfilled: "The muscular arm of the working millions will be lifted, and the yoke of despotism, guarded by the soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms!"[138]

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M MARX TO MAO NOT FOR COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION

EL PARTIDO OBRERO Y LOS CAMPESINOS [1]

(*Iskra*, núm. 3, abril 1901).

La abolición de la servidumbre, el 19 de febrero (estilo antiguo) de 1861, tan alabada por los escritores burgueses de Rusia y del extranjero como un acto de magnanimidad del zar libertador Alejandro II, había sido, en realidad, una medida impuesta por toda una serie de necesidades económicas y políticas.

Había llegado un momento en que la gran propiedad rusa no estaba ya en condiciones de sostener, en el mercado mundial de granos, la concurrencia de los países occidentales; un número cada vez mayor de propietarios atribuía esta inferioridad al débil rendimiento del trabajo servil. Por otra parte, la economía mercantil se desarrollaba en el interior: la nobleza agraria tenía necesidad absoluta de dinero; para procurárselo había hipotecado, desde 1859, el 65 por 100 de los campesinos que la pertenecían. Por este lado, pues, era urgente una reforma radical.

De otra parte, la situación imposible en que se encontraban los campesinos suscitaba movimientos de revuelta aislados, pero que podían generalizarse. En 1848 habían sido saqueados algunos dominios y muertos algunos policías; en 1854-1855, durante la guerra de Crimea, la revuelta estalló de nuevo. Como decía el zar, el gran peligro era que la liberación de los campesinos "comience espontáneamente por abajo". Y excitaba a los Comités, compuestos por nobles y funcionarios, formados para estudiar la cuestión, a terminar lo antes posible sus trabajos.

Los principios sobre los cuales, después de muchas dificultades, se llegó a un acuerdo, fueron los siguientes:

(1) *Obras completas*, segunda edición rusa, t. IV., páginas 100-106. *(Red.)*

1.°, los campesinos sujetos a la gleba son declarados personalmente libres; 2.°, los propietarios ponen a su disposición, contra indemnización, la tierra hasta entonces cultivada por ellos; 3.°, como los propietarios tienen necesidad de dinero en seguida, y los campesinos no pueden pagarles rápidamente, el Estado paga por estos últimos, que amortizarán después su deuda por anualidades.

Dos circunstancias modificaron profundamente este cuadro trazado en principio; los propietarios tenían necesidad no solamente de dinero, sino también de mano de obra a bajo precio; el Estado ruso, lanzándose por la vía del gran capitalismo, de la construcción de ferrocarriles y de los armamentos, tenía enormes necesidades financieras.

Hacía falta, pues, que el campesino, una vez "rescatado", continuase todavía bajo la dependencia del señor. Para esto el mejor medio era no darle bastante tierra para poder vivir él, su familia y su ganado, de suerte que se viese obligado a trabajar para el gran propietario. Este resultado fué obtenido dejando al propietario en libertad de "entenderse" con sus campesinos sobre la extensión del lote a acordarles. Además, se estipuló que aquellos que se resignasen a no recibir más que un cuarto del lote normal serían exceptuados de todo pago. Naturalmente, la tentación era fuerte, y principalmente en las regiones fértiles del Sur y del Sureste, en que el precio del rescate era muy elevado, muchos aprovecharon esta facultad. Los propietarios se pusieron de acuerdo para ceder solamente a los campesinos liberados de las tierras que antes cultivaban estos: 1.°, una parte sólo de estas tierras; 2.°, la menos fértil; 3.°, frecuentemente, las tierras enclavadas dentro de otras; 4.°, para no cederles, en tanto que posible, ni pastos, ni prados, ni abrevaderos, ni bosques.

Todos estos procedimientos dieron por resultado mantener al cultivador llamado libre bajo la dependencia de su antiguo señor: el mujik, para vivir, debía arrendar al señor todos los campos de los cuales se le había expoliado, y se veía envuelto, a causa del enredado amojonamiento de las parcelas, en toda suerte de litigios en que, naturalmente, era incapaz de defender sus intereses. Además, en la mayor parte de los casos

se comprometía a pagar el arriendo en especie, ya íntegramente, ya parcialmente, o bien concluía un contrato de aparcería, lo que tenía siempre por resultado restablecer la prestación personal.

El campesino debía además, al pagar al Estado las anualidades del rescate, no solamente reembolsar las sumas avanzadas por éste a los propietarios, sino alimentar aún el presupuesto sin cesar creciente. Se obtuvo este resultado estimando muy por encima de su valor el precio de la tierra cedida, por medio de diversos artificios de cálculo. Era una manera de hacer pagar al siervo, sin confesarlo, su liberación personal. Por otra parte, como había que asegurar el cobro de las anualidades e impedir al campesino que eludiese, de una manera o de otra, sus cargas, se decidió que la comuna rural sería solidariamente responsable de las obligaciones de todas suertes de sus miembros. Como consecuencia, el campesino no podía salir de la comuna sin obtener—y pagar—un "pasaporte", entregado previo informe favorable de esta última. Esta prohibición de desplazarse no era menos ventajosa para el gran propietario que para el Estado, puesto que garantizaba a aquél una reserva de mano de obra.

De este conjunto de medidas resultaba que la población rural continuaba, aunque libre, en estado de casta inferior, sometida a cargas y a incapacidades jurídicas particulares. Existía desde ese momento en Rusia un régimen de explotación agrícola mixto: de una parte, el régimen capitalista de la pequeña propiedad y del trabajo asalariado "libre"; de otra parte, el régimen feudal de la prestación personal. El primero debía desarrollarse rápidamente, pero el segundo no por eso dejaba de subsistir, dificultando los progresos de la agricultura y reduciendo a la miseria a los trabajadores de los campos.

Los campesinos, que habían esperado una "libertad" muy distinta, comprendieron confusamente, desde que se les dió lectura del Manifiesto *pomposo y obscuro redactado por el metropolita Filaretes, que se les engañaba. En muchas regiones, creyendo que los nobles y las autoridades les ocultaban la verdadera "libertad", se negaron a aceptar las condiciones que les ofrecían los propietarios y se entregaron a actos de violencia,*

que fueron cruelmente reprimidos. En los dos pri-
menos años se registraron 1.100 casos de "rebelión".
Cosa singular, la prensa temía incluso, al principio,
hablar del Manifiesto. En el extranjero, los liberales
Herzen y Ogarev, que habían comenzado por loar la
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dero carácter.

El gobierno y la nobleza, interesados en ver dar a la reforma los frutos que esperaban, velaron primero por hacerla aplicar, tal como había salido de sus manos. Se confió la misión de presidir los acuerdos entre propietarios y campesinos a "árbitros" que la primera vez fueron designados por tres años por los gobernadores, pero que después fueron elegidos por los interesados. Los primeros nombramientos recayeron sobre nobles liberales, partidarios sinceros de la reforma.

La reforma favoreció y aceleró, a pesar de su carácter híbrido, el proceso que se operaba, ya en el régimen agrario, es decir, la penetración del capital. No obstante los obstáculos enumerados, el campesino podía ahora alquilar sus brazos por un salario en dinero, arrendar la tierra, comprar incluso, además del lote que se le había entregado. Esto producía, naturalmente, una diferenciación creciente en el seno de la clase campesina: los que podían comprar tierra, pagar los arriendos en dinero, y, por consiguiente, vender cantidades importantes de trigo para el mercado interior o para la exportación eran los campesinos acomodados; por poco que los precios elevados de los cereales se mantuviesen, podían dar nacimiento rápidamente a una burguesía rural. Al contrario, los campesinos pobres, aquellos, por ejemplo, que no habían recibido más que el cuarto del lote normal, se veían obligados a aceptar las condiciones leoninas del propietario: a pagar su arriendo en jornadas de trabajo estimadas a vil precio, a veces, incluso, faltos de ganado y de material, a abandonar su lote de tierra a otros más ricos que ellos, reduciéndose así a la condición de proletarios. Entre estas dos categorías de campesinos se encontraba una inter-
media que comprendía el mayor número, que podía subsistir todavía independientemente con una tierra insuficiente, pero agobiados por las anualidades del rescate y por las otras múltiples cargas impuestas por el Estado y por las autoridades locales; incapaces, pues

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de recursos, de mejorar sus procedimientos de cultivo y obligados a restringir al mínimo su consumo. La concurrencia era grande para arrendar la tierra a los propietarios, tanto que el precio de los arriendos subía sin cesar. La mayoría de los campesinos, incluso los ricos, se encontraba así en oposición con los propietarios. Estos, de su lado, lejos de enriquecerse, se arruinaban, y encontrando la mano de obra cara y la explotación de sus dominios poco ventajosa, los vendían.

De aquí, hacia 1880, una desilusión general. Los campesinos esperan un nuevo "reparto" de la tierra; algunas veces, sin esperar, lo realizan ellos mismos a expensas del gran propietario. La cuestión agraria, en esta época, se agudiza de nuevo. Narodnaia Volia escribe entonces: "El campesino ruso está en estado, si puede decirse así, de revolución crónica". La socialdemocracia naciente, aunque rompiendo con las ilusiones populistas, reconoce en el campesino un factor decisivo de la futura revolución burguesa. El grupo La Liberación del Trabajo inscribe en su programa "la revisión radical del régimen agrario, es decir, de las condiciones de rescate de las tierras y de su entrega a las comunas rurales".

Pero pronto sobreviene un período de buenas cosechas (1886); el excedente de la población campesina encuentra ocupación en la industria, que crece rápidamente; el alza de los arriendos se detiene; el movimiento campesino se calma y la nobleza agraria, atribuyendo su ruina a la reforma y a la libertad excesiva concedida a los campesinos, inspira la reacción feudal que caracteriza el reinado de Alejandro III. En 1889, las comunas rurales son sometidas en todo y por todo a la autoridad discrecional de funcionarios nuevos, designados exclusivamente entre la nobleza local, los "jefes de zemstvos" (Ziemskie nachálniki), que tienen el derecho de detener a los campesinos sin proceso ni explicaciones, de prohibir a la comuna que disponga de sus fondos, etc. En 1893 una ley declara inalienables los lotes de tierra recibidos en 1861, medida reclamada por los propietarios para hacer bajar el precio de la mano de obra, obligada a permanecer en lo sucesivo en sus aldeas.

La gran miseria de 1891, que causó estragos en regiones pobladas por 35 millones de habitantes, hizo ver a toda la sociedad rusa que la crisis agraria subsistía. Nuevos desórdenes campesinos, en 1898, acompañados de tiroteos contra las autoridades, ocupación de tierras y ataques contra las fincas, evidenciaron que las medidas administrativas eran impotentes para reducir los antogonismos económicos. Hasta 1903 el desarrollo de la industria disminuye, los precios de los arriendos comienzan de nuevo a subir, el movimiento se extiende y gana en fuerza revolucionaria: los campesinos reclaman las tierras señoriales que trabajan con sus brazos, la reducción de los arriendos, el aumento de los salarios.

Muchos socialdemócratas dejaron, durante el período de reacción feudal, de interesarse por la cuestión campesina, negando su papel como factor revolucionario y aplazando su solución para después de la revolución burguesa.

Lenin, por el contrario, desde que entró en la actividad política, comprendió su enorme importancia, precisamente antes y para la revolucion. Al combatir a los populistas, se consagró a demostrar que incluso la economía rural evoluciona en el sentido capitalista y que es inútil contar con la comuna campesina o con los artels para cambiar la marcha de la historia y realizar de un golpe el socialismo. En uno de sus primeros escritos ¿Quiénes son los amigos del pueblo y cómo combaten a los socialdemócratas? indica que la clase destinada, por los progresos del capitalismo, a marchar a la cabeza del movimiento liberador es el proletariado. Pero en esta misma obra, en 1894, reclama "la expropiación plena y entera de la propiedad señorial... coincidiendo con la nacionalización del suelo".

En el curso de estos años, Lenin no cesa de estudiar en las obras mismas de sus adversarios populistas el régimen económico y social de los campos. Los resultados de estas investigaciones inmensas y verdaderamente científicas están consignados finalmente en muchos artículos y estudios diversos, que precedieron a una obra fundamental: El desenvolvimiento del capitalismo en Rusia, impresa en 1899.

Esta obra es el fundamento sólido, pleno de hechos y de cifras, de la doctrina de Lenin. Partiendo de él, Lenin deduce sus conclusiones políticas. La cuestión campesina se presenta en Rusia de una manera muy diferente a como se plantea en Occidente: en Rusia el campesino "padece tanto, sino más, del régimen precapitalista, de las supervivencias feudales, que del capitalismo"; no ha desempeñado aún su papel de "luchador contra el absolutismo y contra los restos del feudalismo"; de otra parte, está todavía fuertemente ligado por millares de lazos personales, e incluso por sus condiciones de existencia, al proletariado industrial. El proceso de diferenciación, en el seno de la clase campesina, se opera, sin duda, rápidamente, pero todavía no está terminado, y, sobre todo, se realiza, en el cuadro feudal, en que la caución solidaria y la comuna agrupan al conjunto de los campesinos. Por consecuencia, el partido socialdemócrata, sin cesar de ser adversario de la pequeña propiedad y de la pequeña explotación en la sociedad capitalista, debe sostener a los campesinos "en la medida en que esta clase es capaz de combatir revolucionariamente contra las supervivencias del feudalismo y de la servidumbre en general, y contra el absolutismo en particular".

La clase campesina, ¿está en estado de combatir revolucionariamente? Las innumerables revueltas de antaño, el sentimiento de dignidad humana despierto poco a poco por la instrucción, los periodos de hambre cada vez más frecuentes, las sectas religiosas que se crean sin cesar contra la religión del Estado prueban la existencia de elementos revolucionarios entre los campesinos. Como son poco conscientes, no se puede saber lo que darán de sí, pero siempre que no se haga reposar sobre ellos todo el movimiento, no se pierde nada aleniándolos.

Tales son las consideraciones que sirven de base al proyecto de programa agrario establecido por Lenin en 1900:

1.° *Abolición de las anualidades de rescate y otros pagos o prestaciones que pesan sobre el campesino como casta inferior.*

2.° Restitución al pueblo de las sumas arrancadas a los campesinos por el gobierno y por los grandes propietarios en forma de anualidades de rescate.

3.° Abolición de la caución solidaria y de todas las leyes que limitan el derecho del campesino a disponer de su tierra.

4.° Abolición de todos los restos de dependencia feudal, ya provengan de leyes o instituciones especiales, ya de que las tierras señoriales y campesinas no hayan sido todavía delimitadas o de que los campos arrebatados en 1861 a los campesinos obligan a estos últimos a volver de hecho a la prestación personal.

5.° Derecho para los campesinos de reclamar ante los tribunales la disminución de los arriendos demasiado elevados y de perseguir por usura a los propietarios y, en general, a todas las personas que, aprovechándose de su necesidad extrema, concluyen con ellos contratos leoninos.

Se puede observar que Lenin no habla ya de la confiscación ni de la nacionalización de los grandes dominios, como en 1894; es porque ahora quiere establecer un programa concreto por el cual pueda combatir la mayoría de los campesinos. Y la mayor parte de estos, piensa Lenin, no está contra la gran propiedad como tal, sino contra los restos de la explotación feudal subsistentes en esta gran propiedad; el campesino puede reclamar la restitución de las tierras cuya privación le reduce a una especie de servidumbre nueva con respecto al propietario que las detenta, pero no la confiscación de todos los grandes dominios.

En 1901, los medios gubernamentales, y con ellos los liberales, celebran el cuadragésimo aniversario de la abolición de la servidumbre. Cada diez años este aniversario era la ocasión de cantar loas a la autocracia en la prensa, en las reuniones, en los discursos, en los libros llamados históricos. Lenin aprovecha este aniversario para recordar la verdadera naturaleza de la "gran reforma", y enuncia una vez más en Iskra el

programa de la socialdemocracia en la cuestión campesina.

El artículo que sigue apareció en abril de 1901, *en el número* 3 *de* Iskra, *todavía impresa en Munich.*

* * *

Cuarenta años han transcurrido desde la abolición de la servidumbre. Es natural que nuestra sociedad (1) festeje con ardor la jornada del 19 de febrero, en que cayó la vieja Rusia feudal y comenzó una época que prometía al pueblo libertad y prosperidad. Pero no hay que olvidar que los discursos elogiosos pronunciados en esta ocasión contienen, con un odio sincero de la servidumbre y de sus manifestaciones, mucho de hipocresía. ¡Qué de mentiras en esta definición corriente de la "gran reforma": "la libertad del campesino con un lote de tierra (2) rescatado *con la ayuda del Estado*" (3)!

El campesino ha sido, en efecto, liberado, pero liberado *de* su tierra, pues se le ha arrebatado una parte considerable del lote que ocupaba desde hacia siglos. Reducidos a un cuarto, o a una parcela miserable del lote normal, centenares de millares de campesinos han sido casi privados de tierra. En realidad los campesinos han sido doblemente robados: no contentos con cercenar sus tierras, se les ha obligado a "rescatar" el resto, que había estado siempre en su posesión, y a un precio muy superior a su valor real (4). Los propietarios

(1) Es decir, los elementos liberales. *(Red.)*

(2) En el curso de los largos preparativos que precedieron a la reforma, se había hablado de liberar a los campesinos *sin darles tierra*. (Red.)

(3) Según los reglamentos de 1861, el campesino debía «rescatar» el lote de tierra que le había cedido el señor; la suma era pagada por el Estado a este último, y el campesino debía pagar después al Estado por plazos escalonados en 49 años y medio. *(Red.)*

(4) El precio del lote era calculado no directamente, sino capitalizando al interés del 6 por 100 el censo anual pagado al propietario en cambio del usufructo de esta tierra. Así se obtenían en ciertas regiones cifras muy exageradas con respecto al valor real de la tierra. *(Red.)*

THE WORKERS' PARTY AND THE PEASANTRY[152]

Forty years have passed since the peasants were emancipated. It is quite natural that the public should celebrate with particular enthusiasm February 19, the anniversary of the fall of old feudal Russia and the beginning of an epoch which promised the people liberty and prosperity. But we must not forget that besides genuine loathing of serfdom and all its manifestations, there is also much unctuousness in the laudatory orations delivered on the occasion. The now fashionable estimation of the "great" Reform as "the emancipation of the peasantry accompanied by a grant of land *with the aid* of state compensation" is utterly hypocritical and false. Actually, the peasants were emancipated *from* the land, inasmuch as the plots they had tilled for centuries were ruthlessly cut down and hundreds of thousands of peasants were deprived of all their land and settled on a quarter or beggar's allotment.[153] In point of fact, the peasants were doubly robbed: not only were their plots of land cut down, but they had to pay "redemption money" for the land left to them, and which had always been in their possession; the redemption price, moreover, was far above the actual value of the land. Ten years after the emancipation of the peasantry the landlords themselves admitted to government officials investigating the state of agriculture that the peasants had been made to pay, not only for their land, but for their personal liberty. Yet, although the peasants had to pay redemption money for their liberation, they were not granted real freedom; for twenty years they remained "temporarily bound"[154]; they were left—and have remained to this day—the lowest social-estate, subject to flogging;

liable to special taxes; bereft of the right freely to leave the semi-feudal commune, freely to dispose of their own land, or freely to settle in any part of the country. Our peasant Reform, far from manifesting magnanimity of the government, on the contrary, serves as a great historical example of the extent to which the autocratic government befouls everything it touches. Under pressure of military defeat, appalling financial difficulties, and menacing discontent among the peasantry, the government was actually *compelled* to liberate the peasants. The tsar himself admitted that the peasants had to be emancipated from above, lest they emancipate themselves from below. But in embarking on emancipation, the government did everything possible and impossible to satisfy the greed of the "injured" serf-owners; it did not even stop at the base device of reshuffling the men who were to carry out the Reform, although the men selected had come from among the nobility itself! The first body of mediators was dissolved and replaced by men incapable of refusing to help the serf-owners cheat the peasantry in the very process of demarcating the land. Nor could the great Reform be carried out without resort to military punitive action and the shooting-down of peasants who refused to accept the title-deeds to the land.[155] It is not surprising, therefore, that the best men of the time, muzzled by the censors, met this great Reform with the silence of condemnation.

The peasant, "emancipated" from corvée service, emerged from the hands of the reformers crushed, plundered, degraded, tied to his allotment, so much so that he had no alternative but "voluntarily" to accept corvée services. And so he began to cultivate the land of his former master, "renting" from him the very land that had been cut off from his own allotment, hiring himself out in the winter for summer work in return for the corn he had to borrow from the landlord to feed his hungry family. The "free labour," for which the manifesto drawn up by a jesuitical priest called upon the peasantry to ask the "blessing of God," turned out to be nothing more nor less than labour-service and bondage.

To oppression by the landlords, which was preserved thanks to the magnanimity of the officials who introduced

and carried out the Reform, was added oppression by capital. The power of money, which crushed even the French peasant, emancipated from the power of the feudal landlords, not by a miserable, half-hearted reform, but by a mighty popular revolution—this power of money bore down with all its weight upon our semi-serf muzhik. He had to obtain money at all costs—in order to pay the taxes which had increased as a result of the beneficent Reform, to rent land, to buy the few miserable articles of factory-made goods which began to squeeze out the home manufactures of the peasant, to buy corn, etc. The power of money not only crushed the peasantry, but split it up. An enormous number of peasants were steadily ruined and turned into proletarians; from the minority arose a small group of grasping kulaks and enterprising muzhiks who laid hands upon the peasant farms and the peasants' lands, and who formed the kernel of the rising rural bourgeoisie. The forty years since the Reform have been marked by this constant process of "de-peasantising" the peasants, a process of slow and painful extinction. The peasant was reduced to beggary. He lived together with his cattle, was clothed in rags, and fared on weeds; he fled from his allotment, if he had anywhere to go, and even *paid* to be relieved of it, if he could induce anyone to take over a plot of land, the payments on which exceeded the income it yielded. The peasants were in a state of chronic starvation, and they died by the tens of thousands from famine and epidemics in bad harvest years, which recurred with increasing frequency.

This is the state of our countryside even at the present time. One might ask: What is the way out, by what means can the lot of the peasantry be improved? The small peasantry can free itself from the yoke of capital only by associating itself with the working-class movement, by helping the workers in their struggle for the socialist system, for transforming the land, as well as the other means of production (factories, works, machines, etc.), into social property. Trying to save the peasantry by protecting small-scale farming and small holdings from the onslaught of capitalism would be a useless retarding of social development; it would mean deceiving the peasantry with illusions of the possibility of prosperity even under capitalism,

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it would mean disuniting the labouring classes and creating a privileged position for the minority at the expense of the majority. That is why Social-Democrats will always struggle against senseless and vicious institutions such as that which forbids the peasant to dispose of his land, such as collective liability, or the system of prohibiting the peasants from freely leaving the village commune or freely accepting into it persons belonging to any social-estate. But, as we have seen, our peasants are suffering not only and not so much from oppression by capital as from oppression by the landlords and the survivals of serfdom. Ruthless struggle against these shackles, which immeasurably worsen the condition of the peasantry and tie it hand and foot, is not only possible but even necessary in the interest of the country's social development in general; for the hopeless poverty, ignorance, lack of rights, and degradation, from which the peasants suffer, lay an imprint of Asiatic backwardness upon the entire social system of our country. Social-Democracy would not be doing its duty if it did not render every assistance to this struggle. This assistance should take the form, briefly put, of *carrying the class struggle into the countryside*.

We have seen that in the modern Russian village two kinds of class antagonism exist side by side: first, the antagonism between the agricultural workers and the proprietors, and, secondly, the antagonism between the peasantry as a whole and the landlord class as a whole. The first antagonism is developing and becoming more acute, the second is gradually diminishing. The first is still wholly in the future; the second to a considerable degree already belongs to the past. And yet, despite this, it is the second antagonism that has the most vital and most practical significance for Russian Social-Democrats at the present time. It goes without saying it is an axiom for every Social-Democrat, that we must utilise all the opportunities presenting themselves to us to develop the class-consciousness of the agricultural wage-workers, that we must pay attention to the migration of urban workers to the countryside (e.g., mechanics employed on steam threshing-machines, etc.) and to the markets where agricultural labourers are hired.

But our rural labourers are still too closely connected with the peasantry, they are still too heavily burdened with the misfortunes of the peasantry as a whole to enable the movement of the rural workers to assume national significance, either now or in the immediate future. On the other hand, the question of sweeping away the survivals of serfdom, of driving the spirit of social-estate inequality and degradation of tens of millions of the "common people" out of the whole of the Russian state system is already a matter of national significance, and the Party which claims to be the vanguard in the fight for freedom cannot ignore it.

The deplorable condition of the peasantry has now become (in a more or less general form) almost universally recognised. The phrase about "the defects" of the Reform of 1861 and the need for state aid has become a current truism. It is our duty to point out that peasant distress arises precisely from the class oppression of the peasantry; that the government is the loyal champion of the oppressing classes; and that those who sincerely and seriously desire a radical improvement in the condition of the peasantry must seek, not aid from the government, but deliverance from its oppression and the achievement of political liberty. There is talk of the redemption payments being excessively high, and of benevolent measures on the part of the government to reduce them and extend the dates of payment. Our reply to this is: all payment of redemption money is nothing more nor less, than robbery of the peasantry by the landlords and the government, screened by legal forms and bureaucratic phrases; it is nothing more nor less than tribute paid to the serf-owners for emancipating their slaves. We will put forward the demand for the immediate and complete abolition of redemption payments and quit-rents, and the demand for the return to the people of the hundreds of millions which the tsarist government has extorted from them in the course of the years to satisfy the greed of the slaveowners. There is talk of the peasants not having sufficient land, of the need for state aid to provide them with more land. Our reply to this is: it is precisely *because of* state aid (aid to the landlords, of course) that the peasants in such an enormous number of cases were deprived of land they vitally needed. We put forward the demand for restitution to the

peasants of the land of which they have been deprived, a condition that still binds them to forced labour, to the rendering of corvée service, i.e., that virtually keeps them in a state of serfdom. We will put forward the demand for the establishment of peasant committees to remove the crying injustices perpetrated against the emancipated slaves by the Committees of Nobles set up by the tsarist government. We will demand the establishment of courts empowered to reduce the excessively high payment for land extorted from the peasants by the landlords who take advantage of their hopeless position, courts in which the peasants could prosecute for usury all who take advantage of their extreme need to impose shackling agreements upon them. We will utilise every opportunity to explain to the peasants that the people who talk to them about the tutelage or aid of the present state are either fools or charlatans, and are their worst enemies; that what the peasants stand most in need of is relief from the monstrous oppression of the bureaucratic power, recognition of their complete and absolute equality in all respects with all other social-estates, complete freedom of movement from place to place, freedom to dispose of their lands, and freedom to manage their own communal affairs and dispose of the communal revenues. The most common facts in the life of any Russian village provide a thousand issues for agitation in behalf of the above demands. This agitation must be based upon the local, concrete, and most pressing needs of the peasantry; yet it must not be confined to these needs, but must be steadily directed towards widening the outlook of the peasants, towards developing their political consciousness. The peasants must be brought to understand the special positions occupied in the state by the landlords and the peasants respectively, and they must be taught that the only way to free the countryside from tyrannical oppression is to convene an assembly of representatives of the people and to overthrow the arbitrary rule of the officials. It is absurd to assert that the demand for political liberty would not be understood by the workers: not only the workers who have engaged the factory owners and the police in direct battle for years and who constantly see their best fighters subjected to arbitrary arrests and persecution—

not only these workers, who are already imbued with socialism, but every sensible peasant who thinks at all about the things he sees going on around him will understand what the workers are fighting for, will understand the significance of a Zemsky Sobor which will emancipate the whole country from the unlimited power of the hated officials. Agitation on the basis of the direct and most urgent needs of the peasants will fulfil its purpose—i.e., carry the class struggle into the countryside—only when it succeeds in combining every exposure of some "economic" evil with definite political demands.

But the question arises whether the Social-Democratic Labour Party can include in its programme demands like those referred to above. Can it undertake to carry on agitation among the peasantry? Will it not lead to the scattering and diversion of our revolutionary forces, not very numerous as it is, from the principal and only reliable channel of the movement?

Such objections are based on a misunderstanding. We must definitely include in our programme demands for the emancipation of our countryside from all the survivals of slavery, demands capable of rousing the best section of the peasantry, if not to engage in independent political action, then at all events consciously to support the working-class struggle for emancipation. We should be making a mistake if we defended measures that would have the effect of retarding social development or of artificially shielding the small peasantry against the growth of capitalism, against the development of large-scale production; but we should be committing a much more disastrous mistake if we failed to utilise the working-class movement for the purpose of spreading among the peasantry the democratic demands of which the Reform of February 19, 1861, fell short because of its distortion by the landlords and the officials. Our Party must include such demands in its programme if it is to take the lead of the whole people in the struggle against the autocracy.*

* We have drafted a Social-Democratic programme which includes the above-mentioned demands. We hope—after this draft has been discussed and amended with the participation of the Emancipation of Labour group—to publish it as the draft programme of our Party in one of our forthcoming issues.

But the inclusion of these points does not mean that we would call active revolutionary forces from the towns to the villages. Such a thing is out of the question. There can be no doubt that all the militant elements of the Party must concentrate on work in the towns and industrial centres; that only the industrial proletariat is capable of conducting a steadfast and mass struggle against the autocracy, of employing such methods of struggle as organising public demonstrations, or of issuing a *popular* political newspaper regularly and circulating it widely. We must include peasant demands in our programme, not in order to call convinced Social-Democrats from the towns to the countryside, not in order to chain them to the village, but to guide the activities of those forces that *cannot* find an outlet anywhere except in the rural localities and to utilise for the cause of democracy, for the political struggle for freedom, the ties which, owing to the force of circumstances, a good many faithful Social-Democratic intellectuals and workers have with the countryside—ties that are necessarily increasing and growing stronger with the growth of the movement. We have long passed the stage when we were a small detachment of volunteers, when the reserves of Social-Democratic forces were limited to circles of young people who all "went to the workers." Our movement now has a whole army at its command, an army of workers, engaged in the struggle for socialism and freedom—an army of intellectuals who have been taking part in the movement and who can now be found over the whole length and breadth of Russia—an army of sympathisers whose eyes are turned with faith and hope towards the working-class movement and who are prepared to render it a thousand services. We are confronted with the great task of organising all these armies in such a manner as will enable us, not only to organise transient outbreaks, not only to strike casual and sporadic (and therefore not dangerous) blows at the enemy, but to pursue the enemy steadily and persistently, in a determined struggle all along the line, to harass the autocratic government wherever it sows oppression and gathers a harvest of hatred. Can this aim be achieved without sowing the seeds of the class struggle and political consciousness among the many millions of the peasantry? Let no one say it is impossible

to sow these seeds! It is not only possible, it is already being done in a thousand ways that escape our attention and influence. This process will evolve much more widely and rapidly when we issue a slogan that will bring our influence to bear and when we unfurl the banner of the emancipation of the Russian peasantry from all the survivals of shameful serfdom. Country people coming to the towns even today regard with curiosity and interest the workers' struggle, incomprehensible to them, and carry news of it to the remotest parts of the land. We can and must bring about a situation in which the curiosity of the bystanders is replaced, if not by full understanding, then at least by a vague consciousness that the workers are struggling for the interests of the whole people, by a growing sympathy for their struggle. And when that has been done, the day of the victory of the revolutionary workers' party over the police government will come with a rapidity exceeding our own anticipation.

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Este articulo suscitó un vivo interés: fué discutido entre los obreros; el programa que contenía originó entre los teóricos una controversia que duró años.

El punto que provocó más objeciones era la restitución a los campesinos de las tierras que se les había arrebatado en 1861. Numerosos socialdemócratas estimaban esta reivindicación muy insuficiente: el sólo remedio, decían, sería la confiscación total de los grandes dominios y su reparto o su nacionalización. La idea de Lenin, por el contrario, era responder a las necesidades inmediatas de los campesinos, satisfacer su sed de tierra, y así dar un aliado a la clase obrera, sin obstruir por eso la marcha de la evolución económica. La medida propuesta, al suprimir las supervivencias feudales y agrandar el lote campesino, satisfacía estas exigencias. El reparto general de los bienes contenía, por el contrario, la utopía reaccionaria de generalizar y de eternizar la pequeña explotación, y, por otra parte, no lo reclamaba la mayoría de los campesinos. En cuanto a la nacionalización, no haría, antes de la revolución, más que reforzar al Estado policíaco.

Pocos meses después se producía una nueva sequía, seguida de una gran miseria, en varias provincias; al año siguiente, en la primavera de 1902, estallaba una serie de movimientos campesinos en todo el Sur y el Sudoeste. Así se confirmaban a la vez la existencia en la clase campesina de fermentos revolucionarios y su poca constancia, pues, a pesar de su violencia y su extensión, esas "revueltas" fueron rápidamente reprimidas.

Lenin no sentía, pues, ninguna necesidad de modificar su programa agrario, pero, viendo la gran fuerza revolucionaria que podía desarrollar la clase campesina en unión con la clase obrera, publicó, en mayo de 1903, un folleto para explicar a los campesinos pobres Lo que quieren los socialdemócratas, qué reformas reclaman para todo el pueblo, para los obreros, para todos los campesinos, para los campesinos medios, para los campesinos pobres. Ya hemos visto por el artículo que precede que su gran preocupación era hacer com-

prender a los campesinos la legitimidad y los fines del movimiento obrero.

El mismo año, en el mes de agosto, el II Congreso del partido socialdemócrata adoptó un programa agrario que difiere muy poco, como el lector podrá darse cuenta de ello, de las tesis contenidas en el artículo de la Iskra:

"A fin de suprimir las supervivencias del régimen feudal, que pesan directamente y de una manera agobiadora sobre los campesinos, y para asegurar el libre desenvolvimiento de la lucha de clases en los campos, el partido reclama ante todo:

"I. La abolición de los pagos de rescate y otros, así como de todas las prestaciones que gravan actualmente a los campesinos como casta inferior.

"II. La abolición de todas las leyes que crean obstáculos a la disposición de su tierra por el campesino.

"III. La restitución a los campesinos de las sumas percibidas como pago del rescate y otros, y, a este efecto, la confiscación de los bienes de los monasterios y de las iglesias, así como de los dominios y gajes de la corona y de los miembros de la familia imperial, el establecimiento de impuesto especial sobre las tierras de los nobles que han beneficiado de la operación del rescate, y la constitución, con las sumas así obtenidas, de un fondo destinado a subvenir a las obras de educación y de beneficiencia de las comunas rurales.

"IV. La institución de comités campesinos:

a) para restituir a las comunas rurales (por expropiación o, si las tierras han pasado de unas manos a otras, por el rescate por el Estado pagado por la gran propiedad noble) las tierras arrebatadas a los campesinos cuando la abolición de la servidumbre, y que sirven, entre las manos de los grandes propietarios, como instrumento de explotación;

b) para remitir, en el Cáucaso, a los campesinos, en propiedad, las tierras que poseían a título de sometidos temporales, etc.;

c) para suprimir los restos de la servidumbre subsistentes en el Ural, en el Altai, en el territorio del Oeste y en otras regiones;

«V. El reconocimiento a los tribunales del derecho de reducir los arriendos demasiado elevados y de declarar nulas las convenciones que tengan un carácter leonino".

Sin embargo, pronto estallaba la verdadera revolución campesina, en 1905; esta vez se extendía a todas las provincias agrícolas; centenares y millares de grandes dominios eran incendiados. Como Lenin lo ha reconocido más tarde, "los acontecimientos evidenciaron que nuestro programa de entonces — la restitución de las tierras arrebatadas en 1861 — era infinitamente estrecho y estimaba insuficientemente las fuerzas del movimiento campesino, de revolución democrática". Lenin declaró que la socialdemocracia no había jamás tenido la intención de oponer una barrera infranqueable al movimiento e hizo adoptar en 1905, en el III Congreso, la fórmula de que el partido "sostendría las reivindicaciones de los campesinos hasta llegar inclusa a la confiscación". En el Congreso de Estocolmo, en 1906, tuvo lugar una revisión completa del programa: todos los grandes dominios debían ser confiscados, una parte de las tierras transformados en propiedad nacional, otra parte en propiedad municipal y el resto repartido entre los campesinos.

¿ QUÉ HACER ? (1)

La Iskra era concebida por Lenin no como una simple hoja de información o de doctrina, sino como un instrumento poderoso para fundir los movimientos locales en un movimiento de toda Rusia, en una palabra, para organizar el partido. Así, el periódico tenía sus agentes en el extranjero y en Rusia y sus corresponsales en los centros obreros. El exito obtenido fué enorme. Pronto fué necesario elevar la tirada a 15.000 ejemplares. En articulos cortos, luminosos y firmes, como los que han sido traducidos anteriormente, Iskra planteaba y resolvia los problemas del movimiento revolucionario. A propósito de los hechos de actualidad, luchaba contra el feudalismo reforzado por las distribuciones de tierras en Siberia, contra la autocracia que destruia por la fuerza el movimiento universitario o dificultaba la ayuda a las victimas del hambre de 1901, contra las nuevas manifestaciones, más o menos caracterizadas, del economismo, etc., y repetia sin cesar que el partido socialdemócrata debe ponerse al frente de todos los elementos, incluso burgueses y pequeñoburgueses, hostiles al absolutismo. Los grupos socialdemócratas de Rusia recibian por medios clandestinos, en cuyo establecimiento habia trabajado Lenin personalmente, los números de Iskra, y unos tras otros, se adherian a su doctrina.

Sin embargo, el periodo de la vacilación y de la dispersión estaba lejos de terminar. En la Unión de los socialdemócratas rusos en el extranjero *la crisis no había hecho más que agravarse: los nuevos emigrantes que venían de Rusia eran en su mayoría hostiles a la*

(1) *Obras completas*, segunda edición, t. IV, páginas 359-508. *(Ed.)*

tendencia representada por Plejánov y Axelrod; desde noviembre de 1898, el I Congreso de la Unión había adoptado un programa que contenía esta frase ambigua: "la lucha política en Rusia no es sino la forma más progresiva de la lucha económica", y el grupo La Liberación del Trabajo, puesto en minoría, había juzgado necesario abandonar la dirección de las ediciones de la Unión; en abril de 1899 aparecía el número 1.° de Raboche Dielo (*La Causa Obrera*), conteniendo el programa del nuevo grupo; en abril de 1900, el II Congreso de la Unión había consumado la escisión definitiva entre este grupo y Plejánov y sus amigos.

¿Cuál era la doctrina de Raboche Dielo? Con respecto al Credo y al bernsteinianismo, hacía suyas las condenaciones de Plejánov. Sin embargo, no emprendía una polémica directa, con el pretexto de que Struve y consortes no tenían ningún peso en el partido, y ponía en guardia contra los excesos de la ortodoxia que "dispara con balas de cañón contra los gorriones". Con respecto a Rabochaia Misl, criticaba sus errores, señalaba la necesidad de la lucha política, pero ponía en duda la existencia misma de una tendencia economista y el peligro que, en todo caso, podría constituir. En cuanto a la táctica, el gran principio, decía, era tener siempre en cuenta "el grado de desenvolvimiento del movimiento obrero", "la diversidad de las condiciones locales y el nivel de las diferentes categorías de la clase obrera". Rabochaia Misl correspondía a un cierto grado, desde luego generalmente sobrepasado, de preparación de los obreros. Las ideas políticas no debían ser presentadas a los obreros más que según una prudente y pedagógica progresión: 1.° agitación puramente económica; 2.° agitación política en relación directa con la lucha económica, y en primer lugar por las reivindicaciones políticas inmediatas; 3.° la misma agitación por todo el programa socialdemócrata; 4.° agitación política sin relación directa con la lucha económica del proletariado o con sus intereses inmediatos; 5° agitación a propósito de los hechos de la actualidad política

y social que interesan al proletariado como vanguardia de toda la nación oprimida en lucha contra el "absolutismo". Tal era la teoría de los estadios, precisada en el número 7 de Raboche Dielo, aparecido en agosto de 1900. La agitación política debía también hacerse siempre conforme a la experiencia obtenida en su lucha económica por esta o la otra categoría de obreros. Por esto la táctica del partido no debía ser "un plan de actividad establecido de antemano", como en Iskra, sino "un proceso de ampliación de los objetivos del partido, creciendo como el partido mismo". De ahí las expresiones opuestas de táctica-proceso y de táctica-plan, entonces usadas. Y el grupo reconocía con sentimiento que "la enorme importancia justamente acordada por el marxismo a la acción revolucionaria consciente le lleva de hecho, a causa de una concepción doctrinaria de la práctica, a estimar insuficientemente el elemento objetivo o espontáneo".

En política, Raboche Dielo reprochó en seguida a Iskra que buscase alianzas fuera del proletariado. La ola de huelgas de 1895-1897 había como despertado el viejo ardor en la protesta de la juventud intelectual: en 1899, 25.000 estudiantes de 30 establecimientos de enseñanza habían adoptado, por primera vez, para hacer triunfar reivindicaciones desde luego puramente universitarias, el arma obrera de la huelga, y desde entonces las persecuciones policíacas, las detenciones, la incorporación en el ejército, como soldados, de los estudiantes comprometidos, suscitaban una serie casi ininterrumpida de movimientos ruidosos, manifestaciones, etc., que alcanzaron su apogeo, en febrero y marzo de 1901, en San Petersburgo, Jarkov y Moscú. El proletariado manifestó espontáneamente su simpatía a los amotinados y recibió él mismo como un aliento para su acción propia. Otro factor de oposición parecía desenvolverse en las municipalidades rurales, en esos famosos zemstvos creados por el acta liberal de 1.° de enero de 1864 para realizar la "autonomía local", y en conflicto perpetuo, desde entonces, con la burocracia centralizadora. Esta había acabado, en 1890, por

colocarles bajo la vigilancia de los gobernadores. Despuès de esta fecha, de año en año, restringia su competencia. Estas municipalidades, abstracción hecha de una minoría de delegados campesinos, estaban compuestas principalmente por la pequeña nobleza provincial, bastante preocupada de la prosperidad de sus mediocres dominios, y que, por consecuencia, tenia intereses frecuentemente opuestos a los de los grandes propietarios, entre los cuales se reclutaba la alta administración. Además, éstas habian creado en torno suyo diversos servicios de agronomia, de enseñanza, de medicina, des estadistica, gracias a lo cual, se creó toda una clase de intelectuales en contato diario con la población rural, observando de cerca las plagas del régimen, e incitados, incluso por sus trabajos, a buscar las causas y el remedio. Estos simples empleados de las municipalidades llegaban asi a jugar a veces un papel más importante que los consejeros mismos, a los cuales documentaban e incitaban a defenser sus posiciones adquiridas y a reclamar reformas. Los zemstvos debian, pues, formar, un inmenso foco de oposición liberal. Para resistir a la administración, aspiraban a agruparse por provincias, después por grandes regiones, y se reunian en Congresos más o menos legales: los empleados de los servicios de estadistica, los médicos, los funcionarios de los servicios agronómicos, tenian también sus tradicionales asambleas corporativas anuales, que comenzaban a pasar de las cuestiones profesionales a las manifestaciones politicas. En San Petersburgo habia una Sociedad libre de economia politica que, con su biblioteca, sus conferencias, el Comité de las escuelas populares dependiente de ella, dotaba de un centro público y nacional a este movimiento progresivo. En fin, en 1901, se oyó hablar del nacimiento, en este medio, de un grupo que reclamaba la concesión de una constitución.

¿Cuál debia ser la actitud del proletariado con respecto a estas diversas categorias de descontentos? Lo-nin comprendia, sin duda, que estos propietarios agrarios, estos estudiantes, estos intelectuales no irian hasta

la revolución; pero atacaban y minaban al absolutismo, y esto era bastante, según la doctrina de Marx y el ejemplo de la socialdemocracia alemana, para recorrer con ellos una parte del camino. De ahí los artículos de Iskra para interesar a los obreros por todas las oposiciones, para alentar a estas últimas, para sostener en su seno a los elementos relativamente más atrevidos, Raboche Dielo, al contrario, veía ahí peligrosos compromisos. En esta crítica, como en las otras que hacía a Iskra, este grupo de emigrados no estaba sólo, pues tenía numerosos simpatizantes en Rusia.

En septiembre de 1901, un grupo de "camaradas" anónimos dirigió "a los órganos socialdemócratas rusos" una carta en la cual formulaba su desacuerdo con Iskra. En primer lugar, decía, "Iskra exagera el papel que pueden desempeñar los ideólogos del movimiento para imprimirle una u otra dirección; y no tiene bastante en cuenta los elementos materiales y el medio que dan a cada movimiento obrero su carácter y su orientación, de los cuales no pueden separarle los esfuerzos de ningún ideólogo, incluso si está inspirado por las mejores teorías y los mejores programas"; además, Iskra "penetrada de intransigencia sectaria... está siempre dispuesta a combatir todo desacuerdo con ella no solamente como una desviación de los principios socialdemócratas, sino incluso como una deserción, para pasarse al enemigo... Esta inclinación excesiva a la polémica procede ante todo de su exageración del papel de la ideología (de los programas, de las teorías...) en el movimiento, y también de las diferencias entre los emigrantes, de las cuales es el eco, y que no hacen más que perjudicar al movimiento socialdemócrata sembrando la división entre los camaradas que militan en Rusia". En fin, "habiendo llegado por vía de cálculos teóricos a la necesidad de la lucha inmediata contra el absolutismo, y sintiendo toda la dificultad de esta acción para los obreros en el estado de cosas actual, pero no teniendo la paciencia de esperar a que estos hayan acumulado fuerzas suficientes, Iskra busca aliados en las filas de

los liberales y de los intelectuales, y frecuentemente abandona así el terreno de la lucha de clases, atenuando los antagonismos para hacer resaltar la comunidad del descontento contra el gobierno".

Este documento merece ser citado porque contiene en resumen las principales críticas dirigidas entonces contra **Iskra**. *Lenin respondió primeramente por un artículo, anunciando una refutación definitiva para pronto, en un folleto que trataría de la agitación política, de la estructura del partido y de los medios de unir los grupos existentes en toda Rusia.*

Este es, en efecto, el contenido de ¿Qué hacer?, *que Lenin había emprendido, sin duda, hacia fines del verano de* 1901 *y que apareció en Ginebra en la segunda quincena de marzo de* 1902. *Lenin publicó después una segunda edición, muy ligeramente abreviada, en* 1907, *en la recopilación* Doce años, *publicada esta vez en Rusia.*

El autor explica en su prefacio que ha querido hacer "una exposición sistemática, lo más popular posible, aclarada por ejemplos múltiples y concretos" de desacuerdo con todos los economistas (es decir, incluso con aquellos que, como los autores de la carta precedentemente analizada, se declaran al mismo tiempo partidarios de la lucha política) en todos los puntos fundamentales.

Rabocheé Dielo *reivindicaba la "libertad de crítica" en el seno del partido (en la medida en que no contradijese su carácter obrero y revolucionario), "en el interés mismo del progreso doctrinal de la socialdemocracia", y reprochaba al grupo de* Iskra *su intolerancia absoluta. La cuestión acababa además de ser planteada en el III Congreso de la* Unión de los socialdemócratas rusos en el extranjero. *Por eso Lenin comienza por aquí.*

I

DOGMATISMO Y LIBERTAD DE CRÍTICA

1.—*¿Qué es la "libertad de crítica"?*

"Libertad de crítica" es innegablemente la consigna más en boga, la que se emplea con más frecuencia en las controversias entre socialistas y demócratas de todos los países. A primera vista nada más extraño que esas solemnes invocaciones a la libertad de crítica. ¿Es que, acaso, en los partidos avanzados se han elevado voces contra la ley que, en la mayoría de los Estados europeos, garantiza la libertad de la ciencia y de la investigación científica? "Aquí hay gato encerrado", se dirá todo hombre imparcial que oiga repetir a todo propósito esta consigna de moda, pero que no haya penetrado todavía la esencia del disentimiento. "Esta debe ser una de esas locuciones convencionales que, como los apólos, son legitimados por el uso y se convierten casi en nombres comunes".

En efecto, nadie ignora que en la socialdemocracia internacional (1) se han formado dos tendencias, cuya

(1) Hecho extremadamente reconfortante: por primera vez en la historia del socialismo contemporáneo, una disputa entre tendencias opuestas desborda del cuadro nacional para transformarse en internacional. Antaño las controversias entre lassalianos y *eisenachianos* (*), guesdistas y posibilistas (**), fabianos y socialdemó

(*) En el partido socialdemócrata alemán, constituido en el Congreso de Gotha, en 1875, por la fusión del partido obrero de Lassalle con el partido marxista fundado en Eisenach por G. Liebknecht y Bebel, los lassalianos que hacían de la conquista de sufragio universal la base de todo el movimiento, formaron el ala derecha, y los eisenachianos el ala izquierda. *(Red.)*

(**) División nacida, en 1881, en el partido obrero francés como consecuencia del debate entre el ala marxista, hostil a todo oportunismo (Guesde, Lafargue), y los elementos que querían «fraccionar el fin ideal en varias etapas serias, inmediatizar en cierta manera algunas de nuestras reivindicaciones para hacerlas en fin posibles». La ruptura fué consagrada en el Congres de Saint-Étienne, en 1882. *(Red.)*

asociaciones obreras profesionales, círculos instructivos obreros y de lectura de la literatura ilegal, círculos socialistas, círculos democráticos para los otros elementos de la población, etc. Tales círculos, tales asociaciones y organizaciones son necesarias por todas partes; es preciso que sean lo más numerosas y tengan funciones las más variadas posible, pero es absurdo y perjudicial *confundirlas* con las organizaciones de *revolucionarios*, extinguir en la masa el sentimiento de que para "servir" a un movimiento de masa es necesario disponer de hombres que se consagren especial y enteramente a la acción socialdemócrata y que, pacientemente, tenazmente, se eduquen para convertirse en revolucionarios profesionales.

He aquí lo que ahora no se comprende (1). *Gracias a nuestro primitivismo, hemos comprometido considerablemente el prestigio de los revolucionarios en Rusia*: en esto radica nuestra falta capital en materia de organización. Un revolucionario blando, vacilante en las cuestiones teóricas, limitado en su horizonte, que justifica su inercia por la espontaneidad del movimiento de masa, más semejante a un secretario de trade-union que a un tribuno popular, sin un plan audaz y de gran extensión, que imponga el respeto a sus adversarios, un revolucionario inexperimentado e inhábil en su oficio (la lucha contra la policía política), ¿es esto un revolucionario? No, esto no es más que un miserable chapucero (2).

Que ningún militante práctico se ofenda por este epíteto, pues, en lo que concierne a la impreparación, me le aplico a mí mismo en primer término. He tra-

(1) Lenin compara, sin duda, la época en que escribe esto, con la época de los *narodovolisi*. (Red.)

(2) En el original: *Kustar* (artesano). Imposible, en este caso, de traducir literalmente sin traicionar el verdadero pensamiento de Lenin. *(Red.)*

bajado en un círculo que se asignaba vastas tareas (1), y, como todos mis camaradas, sufría lo indecible al ver que no éramos más que unos chapuceros en un momento histórico en que, parafraseando el antiguo apotegma, se podría decir:—¡Dadnos una organización de revolucionarios, y removeremos a Rusia en sus cimientos! Y cuando recuerdo el sentimiento de vergüenza que experimentaba entonces, siento crecer en mí la animadversión contra esos pseudo-socialdemócratas cuya propaganda deshonra el nombre de revolucionario y que no comprenden que nuestra obra no consiste en rebajar al revolucionario al papel de chapucero, sin *elevar a éste* al papel de revolucionario.

.....

Lenin refuta a continuación las acusaciones de antidemocratismo y de blanquismo y trata, en una quinta y última parte, la cuestión del "periódico político para ruso" como organizador colectivo del partido.

(1) Lenin se refiere al círculo de los «antiguos», del cual formó parte en San Petersburgo, en 1894-1895, en el momento del despertar del movimiento obrero. *(Red.)*

I

DOGMATISM AND "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM"

A. WHAT DOES "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM" MEAN?

"Freedom of criticism" is undoubtedly the most fashionable slogan at the present time, and the one most frequently employed in the controversies between socialists and democrats in all countries. At first sight, nothing would appear to be more strange than the solemn appeals to freedom of criticism made by one of the parties to the dispute. Have voices been raised in the advanced parties against the constitutional law of the majority of European countries which guarantees freedom to science and scientific investigation? "Something must be wrong here," will be the comment of the onlooker who has heard this fashionable slogan repeated at every turn but has not yet penetrated the essence of the disagreement among the disputants; "evidently this slogan is one of the conventional phrases which, like nicknames, become legitimised by use, and become almost generic terms."

In fact, it is no secret for anyone that two trends have taken form in present-day international* Social-Democ-

* Incidentally, in the history of modern socialism this is a phenomenon, perhaps unique and in its way very consoling, namely, that the strife of the various trends within the socialist movement has from national become international. Formerly, the disputes between Lassalleans and Eisenachers,[140] between Guesdists and Possibilists,[141] between Fabians and Social-Democrats, and between Narodnaya Volya adherents and Social-Democrats, remained confined within purely national frameworks, reflecting purely national features, and proceeding, as it were, on different planes. At the present time (as is now evident), the English Fabians, the French Ministerialists, the

racy. The conflict between these trends now flares up in a bright flame and now dies down and smoulders under the ashes of imposing "truce resolutions". The essence of the "new" trend, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete dogmatic" Marxism, has been clearly enough *presented* by Bernstein and *demonstrated* by Millerand.

Social-Democracy must change from a party of social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of well-attuned "new" arguments and reasonings. Denied was the possibility of putting socialism on a scientific basis and of demonstrating its necessity and inevitability from the point of view of the materialist conception of history. Denied was the fact of growing impoverishment, the process of proletarisation, and the intensification of capitalist contradictions; the very concept, "*ultimate aim*", was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completely rejected. Denied was the antithesis in principle between liberalism and socialism. Denied was *the theory of the class struggle*, on the alleged grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society governed according to the will of the majority, etc.

Thus, the demand for a decisive turn from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less decisive turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism. In view of the fact that this criticism of Marxism has long been directed from the political platform, from university chairs, in numerous pamphlets and in a series of learned treatises, in view of the fact that the entire younger generation of the educated classes has been systematically reared for decades on this criticism, it is not surprising that the "new critical" trend in Social-Democracy should spring up, all

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German Bernsteinians, and the Russian Critics—all belong to the same family, all extol each other, learn from each other, and together take up arms against "dogmatic" Marxism. In this first really international battle with socialist opportunism, international revolutionary Social-Democracy will perhaps become sufficiently strengthened to put an end to the political reaction that has long reigned in Europe?

complete, like Minerva from the head of Jove. The content of this new trend did not have to grow and take shape, it was transferred bodily from bourgeois to socialist literature.

To proceed. If Bernstein's theoretical criticism and political yearnings were still unclear to anyone, the French took the trouble strikingly to demonstrate the "new method". In this instance, too, France has justified its old reputation of being "the land where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a decision..." (Engels, Introduction to Marx's *Der 18 Brumaire*).[142] The French socialists have begun, not to theorise, but to act. The democratically more highly developed political conditions in France have permitted them to put "Bernsteinism into practice" immediately, with all its consequences. Millerand has furnished an excellent example of practical Bernsteinism; not without reason did Bernstein and Vollmar rush so zealously to defend and laud him. Indeed, if Social-Democracy, in essence, is merely a party of reform and must be bold enough to admit this openly, then not only has a socialist the right to join a bourgeois cabinet, but he must always strive to do so. If democracy, in essence, means the abolition of class domination, then why should not a socialist minister charm the whole bourgeois world by orations on class collaboration? Why should he not remain in the cabinet even after the shooting-down of workers by gendarmes has exposed, for the hundredth and thousandth time, the real nature of the democratic collaboration of classes? Why should he not personally take part in greeting the tsar, for whom the French socialists now have no other name than hero of the gallows, knout, and exile (*knouteur, pendeur et déportateur*)? And the reward for this utter humiliation and self-degradation of socialism in the face of the whole world, for the corruption of the socialist consciousness of the working masses—the only basis that can guarantee our victory—the reward for this is pompous *projects* for miserable reforms, so miserable in fact that much more has been obtained from bourgeois governments!

He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new "critical" trend in socialism is nothing more nor less than a new variety of *opportunism*. And if we judge people, not by the glittering uniforms they don or

by the high-sounding appellations they give themselves, but by their actions and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that "freedom of criticism" means freedom for an opportunist trend in Social-Democracy, freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism.

"Freedom" is a grand word, but under the banner of freedom for industry the most predatory wars were waged, under the banner of freedom of labour, the working people were robbed. The modern use of the term "freedom of criticism" contains the same inherent falsehood. Those who are really convinced that they have made progress in science would not demand freedom for the new views to continue side by side with the old, but the substitution of the new views for the old. The cry heard today, "Long live freedom of criticism", is too strongly reminiscent of the fable of the empty barrel.

We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we have to advance almost constantly under their fire. We have combined, by a freely adopted decision, for the purpose of fighting the enemy, and not of retreating into the neighbouring marsh, the inhabitants of which, from the very outset, have reproached us with having separated ourselves into an exclusive group and with having chosen the path of struggle instead of the path of conciliation. And now some among us begin to cry out: Let us go into the marsh! And when we begin to shame them, they retort: What backward people you are! Are you not ashamed to deny us the liberty to invite you to take a better road! Oh, yes, gentlemen! You are free not only to invite us, but to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact, we think that the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render *you* every assistance to get there. Only let go of our hands, don't clutch at us and don't besmirch the grand word freedom, for we too are "free" to go where we please, free to fight not only against the marsh, but also against those who are turning towards the marsh!

B. THE NEW ADVOCATES OF "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM"

Now, this slogan ("freedom of criticism") has in recent times been solemnly advanced by *Rabocheye Dyelo* (No. 10), organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, not as a theoretical postulate, but as a political demand, as a reply to the question, "Is it possible to unite the Social-Democratic organisations operating abroad?": "For a durable unity, there must be freedom of criticism" (p. 36).

From this statement two definite conclusions follow: (1) that *Rabocheye Dyelo* has taken under its wing the opportunist trend in international Social-Democracy in general, and (2) that *Rabocheye Dyelo* demands freedom for opportunism in Russian Social-Democracy. Let us examine these conclusions.

Rabocheye Dyelo is "particularly" displeased with the "inclination of *Iskra* and *Zarya* to predict a rupture between the *Mountain* and the *Gironde* in international Social-Democracy".*

"Generally speaking," writes B. Krichevsky, editor of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, "this talk of the *Mountain* and the *Gironde* heard in the ranks of Social-Democracy represents a shallow historical analogy, a strange thing to come from the pen of a Marxist. The Mountain and the Gironde did not represent different temperaments, or intellectual trends, as the historians of social thought may think, but different classes or strata—the middle bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat, on the other. In the modern socialist movement, however, there is no conflict of class interests; the socialist movement in its entirety, in *all* of its diverse forms (Krichevsky's italics), including the most pronounced Bernsteinians, stands on the basis of the class interests of the proletariat and its class struggle for political and economic emancipation" (pp. 32-33).

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* A comparison of the two trends within the revolutionary proletariat (the revolutionary and the opportunist), and the two trends within the revolutionary bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century (the Jacobin, known as the Mountain, and the Girondist) was made in the leading article in No. 2 of *Iskra* (February 1901). The article was written by Plekhanov. The Cadets,[143] the Bezzaglavtsi,[144] and the Mensheviks to this day love to refer to Jacobinism in Russian Social-Democracy. But how Plekhanov came to apply this concept for the first time against the Right wing of Social-Democracy—about this they prefer to keep silent or to forget. (Author's note to the 1907 edition—*Ed.*)

A bold assertion! Has not Krichevsky heard of the fact, long ago noted, that it is precisely the extensive participation of an "academic" *stratum* in the socialist movement in recent years that has promoted such a rapid spread of Bernsteinism? And what is most important—on what does our author found his opinion that even "the most pronounced Bernsteinians" stand on the basis of the class struggle for the political and economic emancipation of the proletariat? No one knows. This determined defence of the most pronounced Bernsteinians is not supported by any argument or reasoning whatever. Apparently, the author believes that if he repeats what the most pronounced Bernsteinians say about themselves his assertion requires no proof. But can anything more "shallow" be imagined than this judgement of an entire trend based on nothing more than what the representatives of that trend say about themselves? Can anything more shallow be imagined than the subsequent "homily" on the two different and even diametrically opposite types, or paths, of party development? (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, pp. 34-35.) The German Social-Democrats, in other words, recognise complete freedom of criticism, but the French do not, and it is precisely their example that demonstrates the "bane of intolerance".

To this we can only say that the very example B. Krichevsky affords us attests to the fact that the name Marxists is at times assumed by people who conceive history literally in the "Ilovaisky manner".[145] To explain the unity of the German Socialist Party and the disunity of the French Socialist Party, there is no need whatever to go into the special features in the history of these countries, to contrast the conditions of military semi-absolutism in the one with republican parliamentarism in the other, to analyse the effects of the Paris Commune and the effects of the Exceptional Law Against the Socialists, to compare the economic life and economic development of the two countries, or to recall that "the unexampled growth of German Social-Democracy" was accompanied by a strenuous struggle, unique in the history of socialism, not only against erroneous theories (Mühlberger, Dühring,* the *Katheder*-Socialists[146]),

* At the time Engels dealt his blows at Dühring, many representatives of German Social-Democracy inclined towards the latter's

but also against erroneous tactics (Lassalle), etc., etc. All that is superfluous! The French quarrel among themselves because they are intolerant; the Germans are united because they are good boys.

And observe, this piece of matchless profundity is designed to "refute" the fact that puts to rout the defence of the Bernsteinians. The question whether or not the Bernsteinians *stand* on the basis of the class struggle of the proletariat is one that can be completely and irrevocably answered only by historical experience. Consequently, the example of France holds greatest significance in this respect, because France is the only country in which the Bernsteinians attempted *to stand* independently, on their own feet, with the warm approval of their German colleagues (and partly also of the Russian opportunists; cf. *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 2-3, pp. 83-84). The reference to the "intolerance" of the French, apart from its "historical" significance (in the Nozdryov[147] sense), turns out to be merely an attempt to hush up very unpleasant facts with angry invectives.

Nor are we inclined to make a present of the Germans to Krichevsky and the numerous other champions of "freedom of criticism". If the "most pronounced Bernsteinians" are still tolerated in the ranks of the German party, it is only to the extent that they *submit* to the Hanover resolution,[148] which emphatically rejected Bernstein's "amendments", and to the Lübeck resolution, which (notwithstanding the diplomatic terms in which it is couched) contains a direct warning to Bernstein. It is debatable, from the

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views, and accusations of acerbity, intolerance, uncomradely polemics, etc., were hurled at Engels even publicly at a Party Congress. At the Congress of 1877, Most, and his supporters, introduced a resolution to prohibit the publication of Engels's articles in *Vorwärts* because "they do not interest the overwhelming majority of the readers", and Vahlteich declared that their publication had caused great damage to the Party, that Dühring too had rendered services to Social-Democracy: "We must utilise everyone in the interests of the Party; let the professors engage in polemics if they care to do so, but *Vorwärts* is not the place in which to conduct them" (*Vorwärts*, No. 65, June 6, 1877). Here we have another example of the defence of "freedom of criticism", and our legal critics and illegal opportunists, who love so much to cite the example of the Germans, would do well to ponder it!

standpoint of the interests of the German party, whether diplomacy was appropriate and whether, in this case, a bad peace is better than a good quarrel; in short, opinions may differ as to the expediency of any one of the *methods* employed to reject Bernsteinism, but that the German party *did reject* Bernsteinism on two occasions, is a fact no one can fail to see. Therefore, to think that the German example confirms the thesis that "the most pronounced Bernsteinians stand on the basis of the class struggle of the proletariat, for political and economic emancipation", means to fail completely to understand what is going on under our very eyes.*

Nor is that all. As we have seen, *Rabocheye Dyelo* demands "freedom of criticism" and defends Bernsteinism before *Russian* Social-Democracy. Apparently it convinced itself that we were unfair to our "Critics" and Bernsteinians. But to which ones? who? where? when? What did the unfairness represent? About this, not a word. *Rabocheye Dyelo* does not name a single Russian Critic or Bernsteinian! We are left with but one of two possible suppositions. *Either* the unfairly treated party is none other than *Rabocheye Dyelo* itself (this is confirmed by the fact that in the two articles in No. 10 reference is made only to the wrongs suffered by *Rabocheye Dyelo* at the hands of *Zarya* and *Iskra*). If that

* It should be observed that *Rabocheye Dyelo* has always confined itself to a bare statement of facts concerning Bernsteinism in the German party and completely "refrained" from expressing its own opinion. See, for instance, the reports of the Stuttgart Congress[149] in No. 2-3 (p. 66), in which all the disagreements are reduced to "tactics" and the statement is merely made that the overwhelming majority remain true to the previous revolutionary tactics. Or, No. 4-5 (p. 25, et seq.), in which we have nothing but a paraphrasing of the speeches delivered at the Hanover Congress, with a reprint of Bebel's resolution. An exposition and a criticism of Bernstein's views are again put off (as was the case in No. 2-3) to be dealt with in a "special article". Curiously enough, in No. 4-5 (p. 33), we read the following: "... the views expounded by Bebel have the support of the vast majority of the Congress," and a few lines thereafter: "... David defended Bernstein's views.... First of all, he tried to show that ... Bernstein and his friends, after all is said and done [*sic*!], stand on the basis of the class struggle..." This was written in December 1899, and in September 1901 *Rabocheye Dyelo*, apparently no longer believing that Bebel was right, repeats David's views as, its own!

is the case, how is the strange fact to be explained that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which always vehemently dissociated itself from all solidarity with Bernsteinism, could not defend itself without putting in a word in defence of the "most pronounced Bernsteinians" and of freedom of criticism? *Or* some third persons have been treated unfairly. If this is the case, then what reasons may there be for not naming them?

We see, therefore, that *Rabocheye Dyelo* is continuing to play the game of hide-and-seek it has played (as we shall show below) ever since its founding. And let us note further this *first* practical application of the vaunted "freedom of criticism". In actual fact, not only was it forthwith reduced to abstention from all criticism, but also to abstention from expressing independent views altogether. The very *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which avoids mentioning Russian Bernsteinism as if it were a shameful disease (to use Starover's[150] apt expression), proposes, for the treatment of this disease, *to copy word for word* the latest German prescription for the German variety of the malady! Instead of freedom of criticism—slavish (worse: apish) imitation! The very same social and political content of modern international opportunism reveals itself in a variety of ways according to national peculiarities. In one country the opportunists have long ago come out under a separate flag; in another, they have ignored theory and in fact pursued the policy of the Radicals-Socialists; in a third, some members of the revolutionary party have deserted to the camp of opportunism and strive to achieve their aims, not in open struggle for principles and for new tactics, but by gradual, imperceptible, and, if one may so put it, unpunishable corruption of their party; in a fourth country, similar deserters employ the same methods in the gloom of political slavery, and with a completely original combination of "legal" and "illegal" activity, etc. To talk of freedom of criticism and of Bernsteinism as a condition for uniting the *Russian* Social-Democrats and not to explain how *Russian* Bernsteinism has manifested itself and what particular fruits it has borne, amounts to talking with the aim of saying nothing.

Let us ourselves try, if only in a few words, to say what *Rabocheye Dyelo* did not want to say (or which was, perhaps, beyond its comprehension).

C. CRITICISM IN RUSSIA

The chief distinguishing feature of Russia in regard to the point we are examining is that *the very beginning* of the spontaneous working-class movement, on the one hand, and of the turn of progressive public opinion towards Marxism, on the other, was marked by the combination of manifestly heterogeneous elements under a common flag to fight the common enemy (the obsolete social and political world outlook). We refer to the heyday of "legal Marxism". Speaking generally, this was an altogether curious phenomenon that no one in the eighties or the beginning of the nineties would have believed possible. In a country ruled by an autocracy, with a completely enslaved press, in a period of desperate political reaction in which even the tiniest outgrowth of political discontent and protest is persecuted, the theory of revolutionary Marxism suddenly forces its way into the *censored* literature and, though expounded in Aesopian language, is understood by all the "interested". The government had accustomed itself to regarding only the theory of the (revolutionary) Narodnaya Volya as dangerous, without, as is usual, observing its internal evolution, and rejoicing at *any* criticism levelled against it. Quite a considerable time elapsed (by our Russian standards) before the government realised what had happened and the unwieldy army of censors and gendarmes discovered the new enemy and flung itself upon him. Meanwhile, Marxist books were published one after another, Marxist journals and newspapers were founded, nearly everyone became a Marxist, Marxists were flattered, Marxists were courted, and the book publishers rejoiced at the extraordinary, ready sale of Marxist literature. It was quite natural, therefore, that among the Marxian neophytes who were caught up in this atmosphere, there should be more than one "author who got a swelled head..."[151].

We can now speak calmly of this period as of an event of the past. It is no secret that the brief period in which Marxism blossomed on the surface of our literature was called forth by an alliance between people of extreme and of very moderate views. In point of fact, the latter were bourgeois democrats; this conclusion (so markedly confirmed by their

subsequent "critical" development) suggested itself to some even when the "alliance" was still intact.*

That being the case, are not the revolutionary Social-Democrats who entered into the alliance with the future "Critics" mainly responsible for the subsequent "confusion"? This question, together with a reply in the affirmative, is sometimes heard from people with too rigid a view. But such people are entirely in the wrong. Only those who are not sure of themselves can fear to enter into temporary alliances even with unreliable people; not a single political party could exist without such alliances. The combination with the legal Marxists was in its way the first really political alliance entered into by Russian Social-Democrats. Thanks to this alliance, an astonishingly rapid victory was obtained over Narodism, and Marxist ideas (even though in a vulgarised form) became very widespread. Moreover, the alliance was not concluded altogether without "conditions". Evidence of this is the burning by the censor, in 1895, of the Marxist collection *Material on the Question of the Economic Development of Russia*.[152] If the literary agreement with the legal Marxists can be compared with a political alliance, then that book can be compared with a political treaty.

The rupture, of course, did not occur because the "allies" proved to be bourgeois democrats. On the contrary, the representatives of the latter trend are natural and desirable allies of Social-Democracy insofar as its democratic tasks, brought to the fore by the prevailing situation in Russia, are concerned. But an essential condition for such an alliance must be the full opportunity for the socialists to reveal to the working class that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie. However, the Bernsteinian and "critical" trend, to which the majority of the legal Marxists turned, deprived the socialists of this opportunity and demoralised the socialist consciousness by vulgarising Marxism, by advocating the theory of the blunting of social contradictions, by declaring the idea of the

* The reference is to an article by K. Tulin directed against Struve. (See present edition, Vol. 1, pp. 333-507.—*Ed.*) The article was based on an essay entitled "The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature". (Author's note to the 1907 edition.—*Ed.*)

social revolution and of the dictatorship of the proletariat to be absurd, by reducing the working-class movement and the class struggle to narrow trade-unionism and to a "realistic" struggle for petty, gradual reforms. This was synonymous with bourgeois democracy's denial of socialism's right to independence and, consequently, of its right to existence; in practice it meant a striving to convert the nascent working-class movement into an appendage of the liberals.

Naturally, under such circumstances the rupture was necessary. But the "peculiar" feature of Russia manifested itself in the fact that this rupture simply meant the elimination of the Social-Democrats from the most accessible and widespread "legal" literature. The "ex-Marxists", who took up the flag of "criticism" and who obtained almost a monopoly to "demolish" Marxism, entrenched themselves in this literature. Catchwords like "Against orthodoxy" and "Long live freedom of criticism" (now repeated by *Rabocheye Dyelo*) forthwith became the vogue, and the fact that neither the censor nor the gendarmes could resist this vogue is apparent from the publication of *three* Russian editions of the work of the celebrated Bernstein (celebrated in the Herostratean sense) and from the fact that the works of Bernstein, Mr. Prokopovich, and others were recommended by Zubatov (*Iskra*, No. 10). A task now devolved upon the Social-Democrats that was difficult in itself and was made incredibly more difficult by purely external obstacles—the task of combating the new trend. This trend did not confine itself to the sphere of literature. The turn towards "criticism" was accompanied by an infatuation for "Economism" among Social-Democratic practical workers.

The manner in which the connection between, and interdependence of, legal criticism and illegal Economism arose and grew is in itself an interesting subject, one that could serve as the theme of a special article. We need only note here that this connection undoubtedly existed. The notoriety deservedly acquired by the *Credo* was due precisely to the frankness with which it formulated this connection and blurted out the fundamental political tendency of "Economism"—let the workers carry on the economic struggle (it would be more correct to say the trade-unionist struggle,

because the latter also embraces specifically working-class politics) and let the Marxist intelligentsia merge with the liberals for the political "struggle". Thus, trade-unionist work "among the people" meant fulfilling the first part of this task, while legal criticism meant fulfilling the second. This statement was such an excellent weapon against Economism that, had there been no *Credo*, it would have been worth inventing one.

The *Credo* was not invented, but it was published without the consent and perhaps even against the will of its authors. At all events, the present writer, who took part in dragging this new "programme" into the light of day,* has heard complaints and reproaches to the effect that copies of the résumé of the speakers' views were distributed, dubbed the *Credo*, and even published in the press together with the protest! We refer to this episode because it reveals a very peculiar feature of our Economism—fear of publicity. This is a feature of Economism generally, and not of the authors of the *Credo* alone. It was revealed by that most outspoken and honest advocate of Economism, *Rabochaya Mysl*, and by *Rabocheye Dyelo* (which was indignant over the publication of "Economist" documents in the *Vademecum*[155]), as well as by the Kiev Committee, which two years ago refused to permit the publication of its *profession de foi*,** together with a repudiation of it,*** and by many other individual representatives of Economism.

This fear of criticism displayed by the advocates of freedom of criticism cannot be attributed solely to craftiness (although, on occasion, no doubt craftiness is brought into play: it would be improvident to expose the young and as

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* The reference is to the *Protest of the Seventeen* against the *Credo*. The present writer took part in drawing up this protest (the end of 1899).[153] The protest and the *Credo* were published abroad in the spring of 1900. (See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 167-82.—*Ed.*) It is now known from the article written by Madame Kuskova (I think in *Byloye*[154]) that she was the author of the *Credo* and that Mr. Prokopovich was very prominent among the "Economists" abroad at the time. (Author's note to the 1907 edition.—*Ed.*)

** Confession of faith.[156]

*** As far as our information goes, the composition of the Kiev Committee has changed since then.

yet frail shoots of the new trend to attacks by opponents). No, the majority of the Economists look with sincere resentment (as by the very nature of Economism they must) upon all theoretical controversies, factional disagreements, broad political questions, plans for organising revolutionaries, etc. "Leave all that to the people abroad!" said a fairly consistent Economist to me one day, thereby expressing a very widespread (and again purely trade-unionist) view; our concern is the working-class movement, the workers, organisations here, in our localities; all the rest is merely the invention of doctrinaires, "the overrating of ideology", as the authors of the letter, published in *Iskra*, No. 12, expressed it, in unison with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10.

The question now arises: such being the peculiar features of Russian "criticism" and Russian Bernsteinism, what should have been the task of those who sought to oppose opportunism in deeds and not merely in words? First, they should have made efforts to resume the theoretical work that had barely begun in the period of legal Marxism and that fell anew on the shoulders of the comrades working underground. Without such work the successful growth of the movement was impossible. Secondly, they should have actively combated the legal "criticism" that was perverting people's minds on a considerable scale. Thirdly, they should have actively opposed confusion and vacillation in the practical movement, exposing and repudiating every conscious or unconscious attempt to degrade our programme and our tactics.

That *Rabocheye Dyelo* did none of these things is well known; we shall have occasion below to deal with this well-known fact in detail and from various aspects. At the moment, however, we desire merely to show the glaring contradiction that exists between the demand for "freedom of criticism" and the specific features of our native criticism and Russian Economism. It suffices but to glance at the text of the resolution in which the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad endorsed the point of view of *Rabocheye Dyelo*.

"In the interests of the further ideological development of Social-Democracy, we recognise the freedom of criticism of Social-Democratic theory in Party literature to be absolutely necessary insofar as the criticism does not run counter to the class and revolutionary character of this theory" (*Two Conferences*, p. 10).

And the motivation? The resolution "in its first part coincides with the resolution of the Lübeck Party Congress on Bernstein".... In the simplicity of their souls the "Unionists" failed to observe what a *testimonium paupertatis* (attestation of poverty) they betray with this copying.... "But ... in its second part, it restricts freedom of criticism much more than did the Lübeck Party Congress."

The resolution of the Union Abroad, then, is directed against the Russian Bernsteinians? If it is not, then the reference to Lübeck would be utterly absurd. But it is not true to say that it "restricts freedom of criticism". In adopting their Hanover resolution, the Germans, point by point, rejected *precisely* the amendments proposed by Bernstein, while in their Lübeck resolution they cautioned *Bernstein personally*, by naming him. Our "free" imitators, however, make *not a single allusion* to *a single* manifestation of specifically Russian "criticism" and Russian Economism. In view of this omission, the bare reference to the class and revolutionary character of the theory leaves far wider scope for misinterpretation, particularly when the Union Abroad refuses to identify "so-called Economism" with opportunism (*Two Conferences*, p. 8, Paragraph 1). But all this, in passing. The main thing to note is that the positions of the opportunists in relation to the revolutionary Social-Democrats in Russia are diametrically opposed to those in Germany. In that country, as we know, the revolutionary Social-Democrats are in favour of preserving that which exists—the old programme and the tactics, which are universally known and have been elucidated in all their details by many decades of experience. But the "Critics" desire to introduce changes, and since these Critics represent an insignificant minority, and since they are very timid in their revisionist efforts, one can understand the motives of the majority in confining themselves to the dry rejection of "innovations". In Russia, however, it is the Critics and the Economists who are in favour of preserving that which exists: the "Critics" want us to go on regarding them as Marxists and to guarantee them the "freedom of criticism" they enjoyed to the full (for, in fact, they never recognised any kind of *party* ties,* and, more-

* The fact alone of the absence of public party ties and party traditions, representing as it does a cardinal difference between Rus-

over, we never had a generally recognised party body that could "restrict" freedom of criticism, if only by counsel); the Economists want the revolutionaries to recognise the sovereign character of the present movement" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 25), i.e., to recognise the "legitimacy" of that which exists; they want the "ideologists" not to try to "divert" the movement from the path that "is determined by the interaction of material elements and material environment" ("Letter" in *Iskra*, No. 12); they want to have that struggle recognised as desirable "which it is possible for the workers to wage under the present conditions", and as the only possible struggle, that "which they are actually waging at the present time" ("*Separate Supplement" to Rabochaya Mysl*, p. 14). We revolutionary Social-Democrats, on the contrary, are dissatisfied with this worship of spontaneity, i.e., of that which exists "at the present moment". We demand that the tactics that have prevailed in recent years be changed; we declare that "before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all draw firm and definite lines of demarcation" (see announcement of the publication of *Iskra*).* In a word, the Germans stand for that which exists and reject changes; we demand a change of that which exists, and reject subservience thereto and reconciliation to it.

This "slight" difference our "free" copyists of German resolutions failed to notice.

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sia and Germany, should have warned all sensible socialists against blind imitation. But here is an instance of the lengths to which "freedom of criticism" goes in Russia. Mr. Bulgakov, the Russian Critic, utters the following reprimand to the Austrian Critic, Hertz: "Notwithstanding the independence of his conclusions, Hertz on this point [on the question of co-operative societies] apparently remains excessively bound by the opinions of his party, and although he disagrees with it in details, he dare not reject the common principle" (*Capitalism and Agriculture*, Vol. II, p. 287). The subject of a politically enslaved state, in which nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of the population are corrupted to the marrow by political subservience and completely lack the conception of party honour and party ties, superciliously reproves a citizen of a constitutional state for being excessively "bound by the opinions of his party"! Our illegal organisations have nothing else to do, of course, but draw up resolutions on freedom of criticism....

* See present edition, Vol. 4, p. 354.—*Ed.*

D. ENGELS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE THEORETICAL STRUGGLE

"Dogmatism, doctrinairism", "ossification of the party—the inevitable retribution that follows the violent strait-lacing of thought"—these are the enemies against which the knightly champions of "freedom of criticism" in *Rabocheye Dyelo* rise up in arms. We are very glad that this question has been placed on the order of the day and we would only propose to add to it one other:

And who are the judges?

We have before us two publishers' announcements. One, "The Programme of the Periodical Organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad—*Rabocheye Dyelo*" (reprint from No. 1 of *Rabocheye Dyelo*), and the other, the "Announcement of the Resumption of the Publications of the Emancipation of Labour Group". Both are dated 1899, when the "crisis of Marxism" had long been under discussion. And what do we find? We would seek in vain in the first announcement for any reference to this phenomenon, or a definite statement of the position the new organ intends to adopt on this question. Not a word is said about theoretical work and the urgent tasks that now confront it, either in this programme or in the supplements to it that were adopted by the Third Congress of the Union Abroad in 1901 (*Two Conferences*, pp. 5-18). During this entire time the Editorial Board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* ignored theoretical questions, in spite of the fact that these were questions that disturbed the minds of all Social-Democrats the world over.

The other announcement, on the contrary, points first of all to the declining interest in theory in recent years, imperatively demands "vigilant attention to the theoretical aspect of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat", and calls for "ruthless criticism of the Bernsteinian and other anti-revolutionary tendencies" in our movement. The issues of *Zarya* to date show how this programme has been carried out.

Thus, we see that high-sounding phrases against the ossification of thought, etc., conceal unconcern and helplessness with regard to the development of theoretical thought. The case of the Russian Social-Democrats manifestly illus-

trates the general European phenomenon (long ago noted also by the German Marxists) that the much vaunted freedom of criticism does not imply substitution of one theory for another, but freedom from all integral and pondered theory; it implies eclecticism and lack of principle. Those who have the slightest acquaintance with the actual state of our movement cannot but see that the wide spread of Marxism was accompanied by a certain lowering of the theoretical level. Quite a number of people with very little, and even a total lack of theoretical training joined the movement because of its practical significance and its practical successes. We can judge from that how tactless *Rabocheye Dyelo* is when, with an air of triumph, it quotes Marx's statement: "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes."[157] To repeat these words in a period of theoretical disorder is like wishing mourners at a funeral many happy returns of the day. Moreover, these words of Marx are taken from his letter on the Gotha Programme,[158] in which he *sharply condemns* eclecticism in the formulation of principles. If you must unite, Marx wrote to the party leaders, then enter into agreements to satisfy the practical aims of the movement, but do not allow any bargaining over principles, do not make theoretical "concessions". This was Marx's idea, and yet there are people among us who seek—in his name—to belittle the significance of theory!

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet, for Russian Social-Democrats the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary, precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary trends (an eventuation regarding which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists). Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" error may lead to

most deplorable consequences, and only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous. The fate of Russian Social-Democracy for very many years to come may depend on the strengthening of one or the other "shade".

Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but that an incipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries. In order to make use of these experiences it is not enough merely to be acquainted with them, or simply to copy out the latest resolutions. What is required is the ability to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently. He who realises how enormously the modern working-class movement has grown and branched out will understand what a reserve of theoretical forces and political (as well as revolutionary) experience is required to carry out this task.

Thirdly, the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. We shall have occasion further on to deal with the political and organisational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At this point, we wish to state only that the *role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory*. To have a concrete understanding of what this means, let the reader recall such predecessors of Russian Social-Democracy as Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and the brilliant galaxy of revolutionaries of the seventies; let him ponder over the world significance which Russian literature is now acquiring; let him ... but be that enough!

Let us quote what Engels said in 1874 concerning the significance of theory in the Social-Democratic movement. Engels recognises, *not two* forms of the great struggle of Social-Democracy (political and economic), as is the fashion among us, *but three*, *placing the theoretical struggle on a par with the first two*. His recommendations to the German working-class movement, which had become strong, practically and politically, are so instructive from the standpoint

of present-day problems and controversies, that we hope the reader will not be vexed with us for quoting a long passage from his prefatory note to *Der deutsche Bauernkrieg*,* which has long become a great bibliographical rarity:

"The German workers have two important advantages over those of the rest of Europe. First, they belong to the most theoretical people of Europe; and they have retained that sense of theory which the so-called 'educated' classes of Germany have almost completely lost. Without German philosophy, which preceded it, particularly that of Hegel, German scientific socialism—the only scientific socialism that has ever existed—would never have come into being. Without a sense of theory among the workers, this scientific socialism would never have entered their flesh and blood as much as is the case. What an immeasurable advantage this is may be seen, on the one hand, from the indifference towards all theory, which is one of the main reasons why the English working-class movement crawls along so slowly in spite of the splendid organisation of the individual unions; on the other hand, from the mischief and confusion wrought by Proudhonism, in its original form, among the French and Belgians, and, in the form further caricatured by Bakunin, among the Spaniards and Italians.

"The second advantage is that, chronologically speaking, the Germans were about the last to come into the workers' movement. Just as German theoretical socialism will never forget that it rests on the shoulders of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen—three men who, in spite of all their fantastic notions and all their utopianism, have their place among the most eminent thinkers of all times, and whose genius anticipated innumerable things, the correctness of which is now being scientifically proved by us—so the practical workers' movement in Germany ought never to forget that it has developed on the shoulders of the English and French movements, that it was able simply to utilise their dearly bought experience, and could now avoid their mistakes, which in their time were mostly unavoidable. Without the precedent of the English trade unions and French workers'

* Dritter Abdruck, Leipzig, 1875. Verlag der Genossenschaftsbuchdruckerei. (*The Peasant War in Germany*. Third impression. Co-operative Publishers, Leipzig, 1875.—*Ed*.)

FROM MARX TO MAO NOT FOR COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION

political struggles, without the gigantic impulse given especially by the Paris Commune, where would we be now?

"It must be said to the credit of the German workers that they have exploited the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time since a workers' movement has existed, the struggle is being conducted pursuant to its three sides—the theoretical, the political, and the practical-economic (resistance to the capitalists)—in harmony and in its interconnections, and in a systematic way. It is precisely in this, as it were, concentric attack, that the strength and invincibility of the German movement lies.

"Due to this advantageous situation, on the one hand, and to the insular peculiarities of the English and the forcible suppression of the French movement, on the other, the German workers have for the moment been placed in the vanguard of the proletarian struggle. How long events will allow them to occupy this post of honour cannot be foretold. But let us hope that as long as they occupy it, they will fill it fittingly. This demands redoubled efforts in every field of struggle and agitation. In particular, it will be the duty of the leaders to gain an ever clearer insight into all theoretical questions, to free themselves more and more from the influence of traditional phrases inherited from the old world outlook, and constantly to keep in mind that socialism, since it has become a science, demands that it be pursued as a science, i.e., that it be studied. The task will be to spread with increased zeal among the masses of the workers the ever more clarified understanding thus acquired, to knit together ever more firmly the organisation both of the party and of the trade unions....

"If the German workers progress in this way, they will not be marching exactly at the head of the movement—it is not at all in the interest of this movement that the workers of any particular country should march at its head—but they will occupy an honourable place in the battle line; and they will stand armed for battle when either unexpectedly grave trials or momentous events demand of them increased courage, increased determination and energy."[159]

Engels's words proved prophetic. Within a few years the German workers were subjected to unexpectedly grave trials in the form of the Exceptional Law Against the Socialists.

And they met those trials armed for battle and succeeded in emerging from them victorious.

The Russian proletariat will have to undergo trials immeasurably graver; it will have to fight a monster compared with which an anti-socialist law in a constitutional country seems but a dwarf. History has now confronted us with an immediate task which is the *most revolutionary* of all the *immediate* tasks confronting the proletariat of any country. The fulfilment of this task, the destruction of the most powerful bulwark, not only of European, but (it may now be said) of Asiatic reaction, would make the Russian proletariat the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. And we have the right to count upon acquiring this honourable title, already earned by our predecessors, the revolutionaries of the seventies, if we succeed in inspiring our movement, which is a thousand times broader and deeper, with the same devoted determination and vigour.

II

THE SPONTANEITY OF THE MASSES AND THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS

We have said that our movement, much more extensive and deep than the movement of the seventies, must be inspired with the same devoted determination and energy that inspired the movement at that time. Indeed, no one, we think, has until now doubted that the strength of the present-day movement lies in the awakening of the masses (principally, the industrial proletariat) and that its weakness lies in the lack of consciousness and initiative among the revolutionary leaders.

However, of late a staggering discovery has been made, which threatens to disestablish all hitherto prevailing views on this question. This discovery was made by *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which in its polemic with *Iskra* and *Zarya* did not confine itself to making objections on separate points, but tried to ascribe "general disagreements" to a more profound cause—to the "different appraisals of the *relative* importance of the spontaneous and consciously 'methodical' ele-

ment". *Rabocheye Dyelo* formulated its indictment as a "*belittling of the significance of the objective or the spontaneous element of development*".* To this we say: Had the polemics with *Iskra* and *Zarya* resulted in nothing more than causing *Rabocheye Dyelo* to hit upon these "general disagreements", that alone would give us considerable satisfaction, so significant is this thesis and so clear is the light it sheds on the quintessence of the present-day theoretical and political differences that exist among Russian Social-Democrats.

For this reason the question of the relation between consciousness and spontaneity is of such enormous general interest, and for this reason the question must be dealt with in great detail.

A. THE BEGINNING OF THE SPONTANEOUS UPSURGE

In the previous chapter we pointed out how *universally* absorbed the educated youth of Russia was in the theories of Marxism in the middle of the nineties. In the same period the strikes that followed the famous St. Petersburg industrial war of 1896 assumed a similar general character. Their spread over the whole of Russia clearly showed the depth of the newly awakening popular movement, and if we are to speak of the "spontaneous element" then, of course, it is this strike movement which, first and foremost, must be regarded as spontaneous. But there is spontaneity and spontaneity. Strikes occurred in Russia in the seventies and sixties (and even in the first half of the nineteenth century), and they were accompanied by the "spontaneous" destruction of machinery, etc. Compared with these "revolts", the strikes of the nineties might even be described as "conscious", to such an extent do they mark the progress which the working-class movement made in that period. This shows that the "spontaneous element", in essence, represents nothing more nor less than consciousness in an *embryonic form*. Even the primitive revolts expressed the awakening of consciousness to a certain extent. The workers were losing their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them and began... I shall not say to understand, but to sense

* *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, September 1901, pp. 17-18. *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s italics.

the necessity for collective resistance, definitely abandoning their slavish submission to the authorities. But this was, nevertheless, more in the nature of outbursts of desperation and vengeance than of *struggle*. The strikes of the nineties revealed far greater flashes of consciousness; definite demands were advanced, the strike was carefully timed, known cases and instances in other places were discussed, etc. The revolts were simply the resistance of the oppressed, whereas the systematic strikes represented the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo. Taken by themselves, these strikes were simply trade union struggles, not yet Social-Democratic struggles. They marked the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers; but the workers, were not, and could not be, conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system, i.e., theirs was not yet Social-Democratic consciousness. In this sense, the strikes of the nineties, despite the enormous progress they represented as compared with the "revolts", remained a purely spontaneous movement.

We have said that *there could not have been* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc.* The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of

* Trade-unionism does not exclude "politics" altogether, as some imagine. Trade unions have always conducted some political (but not Social-Democratic) agitation and struggle. We shall deal with the difference between trade-union politics and Social-Democratic politics in the next chapter.

thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia. In the period under discussion, the middle nineties, this doctrine not only represented the completely formulated programme of the Emancipation of Labour group, but had already won over to its side the majority of the revolutionary youth in Russia.

Hence, we had both the spontaneous awakening of the working masses, their awakening to conscious life and conscious struggle, and a revolutionary youth, armed with Social-Democratic theory and straining towards the workers. In this connection it is particularly important to state the oft-forgotten (and comparatively little-known) fact that, although the *early* Social-Democrats of that period *zealously carried on economic agitation* (being guided in this activity by the truly useful indications contained in the pamphlet *On Agitation*,[160] then still in manuscript), they did not regard this as their sole task. On the contrary, *from the very beginning* they set for Russian Social-Democracy the most far-reaching historical tasks, in general, and the task of overthrowing the autocracy, in particular. Thus, towards the end of 1895, the St. Petersburg group of Social-Democrats, which founded the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, prepared the first issue of a newspaper called *Rabocheye Dyelo*. This issue was ready to go to press when it was seized by the gendarmes, on the night of December 8, 1895, in a raid on the house of one of the members of the group, Anatoly Alexeyevich Vaneyev,* so that the first edition of *Rabocheye Dyelo* was not destined to see the light of day. The leading article in this issue (which perhaps thirty years hence some *Russkaya Starina*[161] will unearth in the archives of the Department of Police) outlined the historical tasks of the working class in Russia and placed the achievement of political liberty at their head. The issue also contained an article entitled "What Are Our Ministers Thinking About?"** which dealt with the crushing of the

* A. A. Vaneyev died in Eastern Siberia in 1899 from consumption, which he contracted during solitary confinement in prison prior to his banishment. That is why we considered it possible to publish the above information, the authenticity of which we guarantee, for it comes from persons who were closely and directly acquainted with A. A. Vaneyev.

** See present edition, Vol. 2, pp. 87-92.—*Ed.*

elementary education committees by the police. In addition, there was some correspondence from St. Petersburg, and from other parts of Russia (e.g., a letter on the massacre of the workers in Yaroslavl Gubernia). This, "first effort", if we are not mistaken, of the Russian Social-Democrats of the nineties was not a purely local, or less still, "Economic", newspaper, but one that aimed to unite the strike movement with the revolutionary movement against the autocracy, and to win over to the side of Social-Democracy all who were oppressed by the policy of reactionary obscurantism. No one in the slightest degree acquainted with the state of the movement at that period could doubt that such a paper would have met with warm response among the workers of the capital and the revolutionary intelligentsia and would have had a wide circulation. The failure of the enterprise merely showed that the Social-Democrats of that period were unable to meet the immediate requirements of the time owing to their lack of revolutionary experience and practical training. This must be said, too, with regard to the *S. Peterburgsky Rabochy Listok*[162] and particularly with regard to *Rabochaya Gazeta* and the *Manifesto* of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, founded in the spring of 1898. Of course, we would not dream of blaming the Social-Democrats of that time for this unpreparedness. But in order to profit from the experience of that movement, and to draw practical lessons from it, we must thoroughly understand the causes and significance of this or that shortcoming. It is therefore highly important to establish the fact that a part (perhaps even a majority) of the Social-Democrats, active in the period of 1895-98, justly considered it possible even then, at the very beginning of the "spontaneous" movement, to come forward with a most extensive programme and a militant tactical line.* Lack of training of the majority of the revolu-

* "In adopting a hostile attitude towards the activities of the Social-Democrats of the late nineties, *Iskra* ignores the absence at that time of conditions for any work other than the struggle for petty demands," declare the Economists in their "Letter to Russian Social-Democratic Organs" (*Iskra*, No. 12). The facts given above show that the assertion about "absence of conditions" *is diametrically opposed to the truth*. Not only at the end, but even in the mid-nineties, all the conditions existed for *other* work, besides the struggle for petty demands—all the conditions except adequate training of leaders. Instead

tionaries, an entirely natural phenomenon, could not have roused any particular fears. Once the tasks were correctly defined, once the energy existed for repeated attempts to fulfil them, temporary failures represented only part misfortune. Revolutionary experience and organisational skill are things that can be acquired, provided the desire is there to acquire them, provided the shortcomings are recognised, which in revolutionary activity is more than half-way towards their removal.

But what was only part misfortune became full misfortune when this consciousness began to grow dim (it was very much alive among the members of the groups mentioned), when there appeared people—and even Social -Democratic organs—that were prepared to regard shortcomings as virtues, that even tried to invent a *theoretical* basis for their *slavish cringing before spontaneity*. It is time to draw conclusions from this trend, the content of which is incorrectly and too narrowly characterised as "Economism".

B. BOWING TO SPONTANEITY. *RABOCHAYA MYSL*

Before dealing with the literary manifestation of this subservience to spontaneity, we should like to note the following characteristic fact (communicated to us from the above-mentioned source), which throws light on the conditions in which the two future conflicting trends in Russian Social-Democracy arose and grew among the comrades working in St. Petersburg. In the beginning of 1897, just prior to their banishment, A. A. Vaneyev and several of his comrades attended a private meeting[163] at which "old" and "young" members of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class gathered. The conversation centred chiefly about the question of organisation, particularly about the "rules for the workers' mutual benefit fund", which, in

of frankly admitting that we, the ideologists, the leaders, lacked sufficient training—the "Economists" seek to shift the blame entirely upon the "absence of conditions", upon the effect of material environment that determines the road from which no ideologist will be able to divert the movement. What is this but slavish cringing before spontaneity, what but the infatuation of the "ideologists" with their own shortcomings?

their final form, were published in "*Listok*" *Rabotnika*,[164] No. 9-10, p. 46. Sharp differences immediately showed themselves between the "old" members ("Decembrists", as the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats jestingly called them) and several of the "young" members (who subsequently took an active part in the work of *Rabochaya Mysl*), with a heated discussion ensuing. The "young" members defended the main principles of the rules in the form in which they were published. The "old" members contended that the prime necessity was not this, but the consolidation of the League of Struggle into an organisation of revolutionaries to which all the various workers' mutual benefit funds, students' propaganda circles, etc., should be subordinated. It goes without saying that the disputing sides far from realised at the time that these disagreements were the beginning of a cleavage; on the contrary, they regarded them as something isolated and casual. But this fact shows that in Russia, too, "Economism" did not arise and spread without a struggle against the "old" Social-Democrats (which the Economists of today are apt to forget). And if, in the main, this struggle has not left "documentary" traces behind it, it is *solely* because the membership of the circles then functioning underwent such constant change that no continuity was established and, consequently, differences in point of view were not recorded in any documents.

The founding of *Rabochaya Mysl* brought Economism to the light of day, but not at one stroke. We must picture to ourselves concretely the conditions for activity and the short-lived character of the majority of the Russian study circles (a thing that is possible only for those who have themselves experienced it) in order to understand how much there was of the fortuitous in the successes and failures of the new trend in various towns, and the length of time during which neither the advocates nor the opponents of the "new" could make up their minds—and literally had no opportunity of so doing—as to whether this really expressed a distinct trend or merely the lack of training of certain individuals. For example, the first mimeographed copies of *Rabochaya Mysl* never reached the great majority of Social-Democrats, and if we are able to refer to the leading article in the first number, it is only because it was reproduced in an

article by V. I.[165] ("*Listok*" *Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 47, et seq.), who, of course, did not fail to extol with more zeal than reason the new paper, which was so different from the papers and projects for papers mentioned above.* It is well worth dwelling on this leading article because it brings out in bold relief *the entire spirit of Rabochaya Mysl* and Economism generally.

After stating that the arm of the "blue-coats"** could never halt the progress of the working-class movement, the leading article goes on to say: "... The virility of the working-class movement is due to the fact that the workers themselves are at last taking their fate into their own hands, and out of the hands of the leaders"; this fundamental thesis is then developed in greater detail. Actually, the leaders (i.e., the Social-Democrats, the organisers of the League of Struggle) were, one might say, torn out of the hands of the workers*** by the police; yet it is made to appear that the workers were fighting against the leaders and liberated themselves from their yoke! Instead of sounding the call to go forward towards the consolidation of the revolutionary organisation and the expansion of political activity, the call was issued for a *retreat* to the purely trade-union struggle. It was announced that "the economic basis of the movement is eclipsed by the effort never to forget the political ideal", and that the watchword for the working-class movement was "Struggle for economic conditions" (!) or, better still, "The workers for the workers". It was declared that strike funds "are more valuable to the movement than a hundred other organisations" (compare this statement made in October 1897, with the

* It should be stated in passing that the praise of *Rabochaya Mysl* in November 1898, when Economism had become fully defined, especially abroad, emanated from the selfsame V. I, who very soon after became one of the editors of *Rabocheye Dyelo*. And yet *Rabocheye Dyelo* denied that there were two trends in Russian Social-Democracy, and continues to deny it to this day!

** The tsarist gendarmes wore blue uniforms.—*Tr.*

*** That this simile is a correct one is shown by the following characteristic fact. When, after the arrest of the "Decembrists", the news spread among the workers of the Schlüsselburg Highway that the discovery and arrest were facilitated by an *agent-provocateur*, N. N. Mikhailov, a dentist, who had been in contact with a group associated with the "Decembrists", the workers were so enraged that they decided to kill him.

polemic between the "Decembrists" and the young members in the beginning of 1897), etc. Catchwords like "We must concentrate, not on the 'cream' of the workers, but on the 'average', mass worker"; "Politics always obediently follows economics",* etc., etc., became the fashion, exercising an irresistible influence upon the masses of the youth who were attracted to the movement but who, in the majority of cases, were acquainted only with such fragments of Marxism as were expounded in legally appearing publications.

Political consciousness was completely overwhelmed by spontaneity—the spontaneity of the "Social-Democrats" who repeated Mr. V. V.'s "ideas", the spontaneity of those workers who were carried away by the arguments that a kopek added to a ruble was worth more than any socialism or politics, and that they must "fight, knowing that they are fighting, not for the sake of some future generation, but for themselves and their children" (leader in *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1). Phrases like these have always been a favourite weapon of the West-European bourgeois, who, in their hatred for socialism, strove (like the German "*Sozial-Politiker*" Hirsch) to transplant English trade-unionism to their native soil and to preach to the workers that by engaging in the purely trade-union struggle** they would be fighting for themselves and for their children, and not for some future generations with some future socialism. And now the "V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy" have set about repeating these bourgeois phrases. It is important at this point to note three circumstances that will be useful to our further analysis of *contemporary* differences.***

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* These quotations are taken from the same leading article in the first number of *Rabochaya Mysl*. One can judge from this the degree of theoretical training possessed by these "V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy",[166] who kept repeating the crude vulgarisation of "economic materialism" at a time when the Marxists were carrying on a literary war against the real Mr. V. V., who had long ago been dubbed "a past master of reactionary deeds" for holding *similar* views on the relations between politics and economics!

** The Germans even have a special expression, *Nur-Gewerkschaftler*, which means an advocate of the "pure trade-union" struggle.

*** We emphasise the word *contemporary* for the benefit of those who may pharisaically shrug their shoulders and say: It is easy enough to attack *Rabochaya Mysl* now, but is not all this ancient history? *Mutato nomine de te fabula narratur* (change the name and the tale is

In the first place, the overwhelming of political consciousness by spontaneity, to which we referred above, also took place *spontaneously*. This may sound like a pun, but, alas, it is the bitter truth. It did not take place as a result of an open struggle between two diametrically opposed points of view, in which one triumphed over the other; it occurred because of the fact that an increasing number of "old" revolutionaries were "torn away" by the gendarmes and increasing numbers of "young" "V. V.'s of Russian Social- Democracy" appeared on the scene. Everyone, who has, I shall not say participated in, but at least breathed the atmosphere of, the *present-day* Russian movement, knows perfectly well that this is precisely the case. And if, nevertheless, we insist strongly that the reader be fully clear on this generally known fact, if we cite, for explicitness, as it were, the facts of the first edition of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and of the polemic between the "old" and the "young" at the beginning of 1897, we do this because the people who vaunt their "democracy" speculate on the ignorance of these facts on the part of the broad public (or of the very young generation). We shall return to this point further on.

Secondly, in the very first literary expression of Economism we observe the exceedingly curious phenomenon—highly characteristic for an understanding of all the differences prevailing among present-day Social-Democrats—that the adherents of the "labour movement pure and simple", worshippers of the closest "organic" contacts (*Rabocheye Dyelo*'s term) with the proletarian struggle, opponents of any non-worker intelligentsia (even a socialist intelligentsia), are compelled, in order to defend their positions, to resort to the arguments of the *bourgeois* "pure trade-unionists". This shows that from the very outset *Rabochaya Mysl* began—unconsciously—to implement the programme of the *Credo*. This shows (something *Rabocheye Dyelo* cannot grasp) that *all* worship of the spontaneity of the working-class movement, all belittling of the role of "the conscious element", of the role of Social-Democracy, *means*, *quite independently of whether he who belittles that role desires it or not*, *a strength-*

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about you.—*Ed*.) is our answer to such contemporary Pharisees, whose complete subjection to the ideas of *Rabochaya Mysl* will be *proved* further on.

ening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers. All those who talk about "overrating the importance of ideology",* about exaggerating the role of the conscious element,** etc., imagine that the labour movement pure and simple can elaborate, and will elaborate, an independent ideology for itself, if only the workers "wrest their fate from the hands of the leaders". But this is a profound mistake. To supplement what has been said above, we shall quote the following profoundly true and important words of Karl Kautsky on the new draft programme of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party:***

"Many of our revisionist critics believe that Marx asserted that economic development and the class struggle create, not only the conditions for socialist production, but also, and directly, the *consciousness* [K. K.'s italics] of its necessity. And these critics assert that England, the country most highly developed capitalistically, is more remote than any other from this consciousness. Judging by the draft, one might assume that this allegedly orthodox-Marxist view, which is thus refuted, was shared by the committee that drafted the Austrian programme. In the draft programme it is stated: 'The more capitalist development increases the numbers of the proletariat, the more the proletariat is compelled and becomes fit to fight against capitalism. The proletariat becomes conscious' of the possibility and of the necessity for socialism.' In this connection socialist consciousness appears to be a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course, socialism, as a doctrine, has its roots in modern economic relationships just as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and, like the latter, emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other; each arises under different conditions. Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for socialist production as, say, modern technology, and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicle of science is not the proletariat, but the *bourgeois intelligentsia* [K. K.'s italics]: it was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduce it into the proletarian class

* Letter of the "Economists", in *Iskra*, No. 12.

** *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10.

*** *Neue Zeit*, 1901-02, XX, I, No. 3, p. 79. The committee's draft to which Kautsky refers was adopted by the Vienna Congress (at the end of last year) in a slightly amended form.

struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without [*von Aussen Hineingetragenes*] and not something that arose within it spontaneously [*urwüchsig*]. Accordingly, the old Hainfeld programme quite rightly stated that the task of Social-Democracy is to imbue the proletariat [literally: saturate the proletariat] with the *consciousness* of its position and the consciousness of its task. There would be no need for this if consciousness arose of itself from the class struggle. The new draft copied this proposition from the old programme, and attached it to the proposition mentioned above. But this completely broke the line of thought...."

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement,* the *only* choice is—either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for mankind has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way*, *to turn aside from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology. There is much talk of spontaneity. But the *spontaneous* development of the working-class movement leads to its subordination to bourgeois ideology, *to its development along the lines of the Credo programme*; for the spontaneous working-class movement is trade-unionism, is *Nur-Gewerkschaftlerei*, and trade-unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie. Hence, our task, the task of Social-Democracy, is *to combat spontaneity*, *to divert* the working-class movement from this spontaneous, trade-unionist striving to

* This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. They take part, however, not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings; in other words, they take part only when they are able, and to the extent that they are able, more or less, to acquire the knowledge of their age and develop that knowledge. But in order that working men *may succeed in this more often*, every effort must be made to raise the level of the consciousness of the workers in general; it is necessary that the workers do not confine themselves to the artificially restricted limits of "*literature for workers*" but that they learn to an increasing degree to master *general literature*. It would be even truer to say "are not confined", instead of "do not confine themselves", because the workers themselves wish to read and do read all that is written for the intelligentsia, and only a few (bad) intellectuals believe that it is enough "for workers" to be told a few things about factory conditions and to have repeated to them over and over again what has long been known.

come under the wing of the bourgeoisie, and to bring it under the wing of revolutionary Social-Democracy. The sentence employed by the authors of the "Economist" letter published in *Iskra*, No. 12, that the efforts of the most inspired ideologists fail to divert the working-class movement from the path that is determined by the interaction of the material elements and the material environment is therefore *tantamount to renouncing socialism*. If these authors were capable of fearlessly, consistently, and thoroughly considering what they say, as everyone who enters the arena of literary and public activity should be, there would be nothing left for them but to "fold their useless arms over their empty breasts" and surrender the field of action to the Struves and Prokopoviches, who are dragging the working-class movement "along the line of least resistance", i.e., along the line of bourgeois trade-unionism, or to the Zubatovs, who are dragging it along the line of clerical and gendarme "ideology".

Let us recall the example of Germany. What was the historic service Lassalle rendered to the German working-class movement? It was that he *diverted* that movement from the path of progressionist trade-unionism and co-operativism towards which it had been spontaneously moving (*with the benign assistance of Schulze-Delitzsch and his like*). To fulfil such a task it was necessary to do something quite different from talking of underrating the spontaneous element, of tactics-as-process, of the interaction between elements and environment, etc. *A fierce struggle against spontaneity* was necessary, and only after such a struggle, extending over many years, was it possible, for instance, to convert the working population of Berlin from a bulwark of the progressionist party into one of the finest strongholds of Social-Democracy. This struggle is by no means over even today (as might seem to those who learn the history of the German movement from Prokopovich, and its philosophy from Struve). Even now the German working class is, so to speak, split up among a number of ideologies. A section of the workers is organised in Catholic and monarchist trade unions; another section is organised in the Hirsch-Duncker unions,[167] founded by the bourgeois worshippers of English trade-unionism; the third is organised in Social-Democratic trade unions. The last-named group is immeasurably more numerous than the rest,

but the Social-Democratic ideology was able to achieve this superiority, and will be able to maintain it, only in an unswerving struggle against all other ideologies.

But why, the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement, the movement along the line of least resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal *immeasurably* more means of dissemination.* And the younger the socialist movement in any given country, the more vigorously it must struggle against all attempts to entrench non-socialist ideology, and the more resolutely the workers must be warned against the bad counsellors who shout against "overrating the conscious element", etc. The authors of the Economist letter, in unison with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, inveigh against the intolerance that is characteristic of the infancy of the movement. To this we reply: Yes, our movement is indeed in its infancy, and in order that it may grow up faster, it must become imbued with intolerance against those who retard its growth by their subservience to spontaneity. Nothing is so ridiculous and harmful as pretending that we are "old hands" who have long ago experienced all the decisive stages of the struggle.

Thirdly, the first issue of *Rabochaya Mysl* shows that the term "Economism" (which, of course, we do not propose to abandon, since, in one way or another, this designation has already established itself) does not adequately convey the real character of the new trend. *Rabochaya Mysl* does not altogether repudiate the political struggle; the rules for a workers' mutual benefit fund published in its first issue con-

* It is often said that the working class *spontaneously* gravitates towards socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory reveals the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily, *provided*, however, this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity, *provided* it subordinates spontaneity to itself. Usually this is taken for granted, but it is precisely this which *Rabocheye Dyelo* forgets or distorts. The working class spontaneously gravitates towards socialism; nevertheless, most widespread (and continuously and diversely revived) bourgeois ideology spontaneously imposes itself upon the working class to a still greater degree.

tain a reference to combating the government. *Rabochaya Mysl* believes, however, that "politics always obediently follows economics" (*Rabocheye Dyelo* varies this thesis when it asserts in its programme that "in Russia more than in any other country, the economic struggle is inseparable from the political struggle"). *If by politics is meant Social-Democratic politics*, then the theses of *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo* are utterly incorrect. The economic struggle of the workers is very often connected (although not inseparably) with bourgeois politics, clerical politics, etc., as we have seen. *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s theses are correct, if by politics is meant trade-union politics, viz., the common striving of all workers to secure from the government measures for alleviating the distress to which their condition gives rise, but which do not abolish that condition, i.e., which do not remove the subjection of labour to capital. That striving indeed is common to the English trade-unionists, who are hostile to socialism, to the Catholic workers, to the "Zubatov" workers, etc. There is politics and politics. Thus, we see that *Rabochaya Mysl* does not so much deny the political struggle, as it bows to its *spontaneity*, to its unconsciousness. While fully recognising the political struggle (better: the political desires and demands of the workers), which arises spontaneously from the working-class movement itself, it absolutely refuses *independently to work out* a specifically *Social-Democratic politics* corresponding to the general tasks of socialism and to present-day conditions in Russia. Further on we shall show that *Rabocheye Dyelo* commits the same error.

C. THE SELF-EMANCIPATION GROUP[168] AND *RABOCHEYE DYELO*

We have dealt at such length with the little-known and now almost forgotten leading article in the first issue of *Rabochaya Mysl* because it was the first and most striking expression of that general stream of thought which afterwards emerged into the light of day in innumerable streamlets. V. I. was perfectly right when, in praising the first issue and the leading article of *Rabochaya Mysl*, he said that the article had been written in a "sharp and fervent" manner ("*Listok*" *Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 49). Every man with convictions

who thinks he has something new to say writes "fervently" and in such a way as to make his views stand out in bold relief. Only those who are accustomed to sitting between two stools lack "fervour"; only such people are able to praise the fervour of *Rabochaya Mysl* one day and attack the "fervent polemics" of its opponents the next.

We shall not dwell on the "*Separate Supplement*" *to Rabochaya Mysl* (below we shall have occasion, on various points, to refer to this work, which expresses the ideas of the Economists more consistently than any other) but shall briefly mention the "Appeal of the Self-Emancipation of the Workers Group" (March 1899, reprinted in the London *Nakanune*,[169] No. 7, July 1899). The authors of the "Appeal" rightly say that "the workers of Russia are *only just awakening*, are just beginning to look about them, and are *instinctively clutching at the first available* means of struggle". Yet they draw from this the same false conclusion as that drawn by *Rabochaya Mysl*, forgetting that the instinctive is the unconscious (the spontaneous) to the aid of which socialists must come; that the "first available means of struggle" will always be, in modern society, the trade-union means of struggle, and the "first available" ideology the bourgeois (trade-union) ideology. Similarly, these authors do not "repudiate" politics, they merely (merely!) echo Mr. V. V. that politics is the superstructure, and therefore, "political agitation must be the superstructure to the agitation carried on in favour of the economic struggle; it must arise on the basis of this struggle and follow in its wake."

As for *Rabocheye Dyelo*, it began its activity with the "defence" of the Economists. It stated a *downright untruth* in its opening issue (No. 1, pp. 141-42) in claiming that it "does not know to which young comrades Axelrod referred" when he warned the Economists in his well-known pamphlet.* In the polemic that flared up with Axelrod and Plekhanov over this untruth, *Rabocheye Dyelo* had to admit that "in form of perplexity, it sought *to defend* all the younger Social-Democrats abroad from this unjust accusation" (the charge of narrowness levelled by Axelrod at the Economists). In re-

* *Present Tasks and Tactics of the Russian Social-Democracy*, Geneva, 1898. Two letters to *Rabochaya Gazeta*, written in 1897.

ality this accusation was completely justified, and *Rabocheye Dyelo* knew perfectly well that, among others, it applied also to V. I., a member of its Editorial Board. Let me note in passing that in this polemic Axelrod was entirely right and *Rabocheye Dyelo* entirely wrong in their respective interpretations of my pamphlet *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*.* The pamphlet was written in 1897, before the appearance of *Rabochaya Mysl*, when I thought, rightly, that the *original* tendency of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, which I characterised above, was dominant. And this tendency was dominant at least until the middle of 1898. Consequently, *Rabocheye Dyelo* had no right whatever, in its attempt to deny the existence and danger of Economism, to refer to a pamphlet that expressed views *forced out* by "Economist" views in St. Petersburg in 1897-98.**

But *Rabocheye Dyelo* not only "defended" the Economists, it itself constantly fell into their fundamental errors. The source of this confusion is to be found in the ambiguity of the interpretation given to the following thesis of the *Rabocheye Dyelo* programme: "We consider that the most important phenomenon of Russian life, the one that will mainly *determine the tasks* [our italics] and the character of the publication activity of the Union, is the *mass working-class movement* [*Rabocheye Dyelo*'s italics] which has arisen in recent years." That the mass movement is a most important phenomenon is a fact not to be disputed. But the crux of the matter is, how is one to understand the statement that the mass working-class movement will "determine the tasks"? It may

* See present edition, Vol. 2, pp. 323—51.—*Ed.*

** In defending its first untruth ("we do not know to which young comrades Axelrod referred"), *Rabocheye Dyelo* added a second, when it wrote in its *Reply*: "Since the review of *The Tasks* was published, tendencies have arisen, or become more or less clearly defined, among certain Russian Social-Democrats, towards economic one-sidedness, which represent a step backwards from the state of our movement as described in *The Tasks*" (p. 9). This, in the *Reply*, published *in 1900*. But the first issue of *Rabocheye Dyelo* (containing the review) appeared *in April 1899*. Did Economism really arise only in 1899? No. The year 1899 saw the first protest of the *Russian* Social-Democrats against Economism (the protest against the *Credo*). Economism arose in 1897, as *Rabocheye Dyelo* very well knows, for already *in November 1898*, *V. I.* was praising *Rabochaya Mysl* (see "*Listok*" *Rabotnika*, No. 9-10).

be interpreted in one of two ways. *Either* it means bowing to the spontaneity of this movement, i.e., reducing the role of Social-Democracy to mere subservience to the working-class movement as such (the interpretation of *Rabochaya Mysl*, the Self-Emancipation Group, and other Economists), or it means that the mass movement places before us new theoretical, political, and organisational tasks, far more complicated than those that might have satisfied us in the period before the rise of the mass movement. *Rabocheye Dyelo* inclined and still inclines towards the first interpretation, for it has said nothing definite about any new tasks, but has argued constantly as though the "mass movement" *relieves* us of the necessity of clearly understanding and fulfilling the tasks it sets before us. We need only point out that *Rabocheye Dyelo* considered that it was impossible to set the overthrow of the autocracy as the *first* task of the mass working-class movement, and that it degraded this task (in the name of the mass movement) to that of a struggle for immediate political demands (*Reply*, p. 25).

We shall pass over the article by B. Krichevsky, editor of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, entitled "The Economic and the Political Struggle in the Russian Movement", published in No. 7 of that paper, in which these very mistakes* are repeated, and

* The "stages theory", or the theory of "timid zigzags", in the political struggle is expressed, for example, in this article, in the following way: "Political demands, which in their character are common to the whole of Russia, should, however, at first (this was written in August 1900!) correspond to the experience gained by the given stratum [*sic*!] of workers in the economic struggle. Only [!] on the basis of this experience can and should political agitation be taken up," etc. (p. 11). On page 4, the author, protesting against what he regards as the absolutely unfounded charge of Economist heresy, pathetically exclaims: "What Social-Democrat does not know that according to the theories of Marx and Engels the economic interests of certain classes play a decisive role in history, and, *consequently*, that particularly the proletariat's struggle for its economic interests must be of paramount importance in its class development and struggle for emancipation?" (Our italics.) The word "consequently" is completely irrelevant. The fact that economic interests play a decisive role *does not in the least imply* that the economic (i.e., trade-union) struggle is of prime importance; for the most essential, the "decisive" interests of classes can be satisfied *only* by radical *political* changes in general. In particular the fundamental economic interests of the proletariat can be satisfied only by a political revolution that will replace the dic-

proceed directly to *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10. We shall not, of course, enter in detail into the various objections raised by Krichevsky and Martynov against *Zarya* and *Iskra*. We are here interested solely in the basis of principles on which *Rabocheye Dyelo*, in its tenth issue, took its stand. Thus, we shall not examine the strange fact that *Rabocheye Dyelo* saw a "diametrical contradiction" between the proposition:

"Social-Democracy does not tie its hands, it does not restrict its activities to some one preconceived plan or method of political struggle; it recognises all means of struggle as long as they correspond to the forces at the disposal of the Party," etc. (*Iskra*, No. 1)*.

and the proposition:

"Without a strong organisation skilled in waging political struggle under all circumstances and at all times, there can be no question of that systematic plan of action, illumined by firm principles and steadfastly carried out, which alone is worthy of the name of tactics" (*Iskra*, No. 4).**

To confound recognition, *in principle*, of all means of struggle, of all plans and methods, provided they are expedient, with the demand *at a given political moment* to be guided by a strictly observed plan is tantamount, if we are to talk of tactics, to confounding the recognition by medical science of various methods of treating diseases with the necessity for adopting a certain definite method of treatment for a given disease. The point is, however, that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, itself the victim of a disease which we have called bowing to spontaneity, refuses to recognise any "method of treatment" for *that* disease. Hence, it has made the remarkable discovery that "tactics-as-plan contradicts the fundamental spirit of Marxism" (No. 10, p. 18), that tactics are "*a process of growth of Party tasks*, *which grow together with the Party*" (p. 11, *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s italics). This remark

tatorship of the bourgeoisie by the dictatorship of the proletariat. Krichevsky repeats the arguments of the "V. V.'s of Russian Social-Democracy" (viz., that politics follows economics, etc.) and of the Bernsteinians of German Social-Democracy (e.g., by similar arguments Woltmann sought to prove that the workers must first of all acquire "economic power" before they can think about political revolution).

* See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 370-71.—*Ed*.

** See present volume, p. 18.—*Ed*.

has every chance of becoming a celebrated maxim, a permanent monument to the *Rabocheye Dyelo* "trend". To the question, *whither*? the leading organ replies: Movement is a process of changing the distance between the starting-point and subsequent points of the movement. This matchless example of profundity is not merely a curiosity (were it that, it would not be worth dealing with at length), but *the programme of a whole trend*, the very programme which R. M. (in the "*Separate Supplement*" *to Rabochaya Mysl*) expressed in the words: That struggle is desirable which is possible, and the struggle which is possible is that which is going on at the given moment. This is precisely the trend of unbounded opportunism, which passively adapts itself to spontaneity.

"Tactics-as-plan contradicts the essence of Marxism!" But this is a slander of Marxism; it means turning Marxism into the caricature held up by the Narodniks in their struggle against us. It means belittling the initiative and energy of class-conscious fighters, whereas Marxism, on the contrary, gives a gigantic impetus to the initiative and energy of the Social-Democrat, opens up for him the widest perspectives, and (if one may so express it) places at his disposal the mighty force of many millions of workers "spontaneously" rising for the struggle. The entire history of international Social-Democracy teems with plans advanced now by one, now by another, political leader, some confirming the far-sightedness and the correct political and organisational views of their authors and others revealing their short-sightedness and their political errors. At the time when Germany was at one of the crucial turning-points in its history—the formation of the Empire, the opening of the Reichstag, and the granting of universal suffrage—Liebknecht had one plan for Social-Democratic politics and work in general, and Schweitzer had another. When the anti-socialist law came down on the heads of the German socialists, Most and Hasselmann had one plan—they were prepared then and there to call for violence and terror; Höchberg, Schramm, and (partly) Bernstein had another—they began to preach to the Social-Democrats that they themselves had provoked the enactment of the law by being unreasonably bitter and revolutionary, and must now earn forgiveness by their exemplary conduct. There was

yet a third plan proposed by those who prepared and carried out the publication of an illegal organ. It is easy, of course, with hindsight, many years after the struggle over the selection of the path to be followed, and after history has pronounced its verdict as to the expediency of the path selected, to utter profound maxims about the growth of Party tasks, which grow together with the Party. But at a time of confusion,* when the Russian "Critics" and Economists are degrading Social-Democracy to the level of trade-unionism, and when the terrorists are strongly advocating the adoption of "tactics-as-plan" that repeats the old mistakes, at such a time, to confine oneself to profundities of this kind, means simply to issue to oneself a "certificate of poverty". At a time when many Russian Social-Democrats suffer from a lack of initiative and energy, from an inadequate "scope of political propaganda, agitation, and organisation,"** from a lack of "plans" for a broader organisation of revolutionary work, at such a time, to declare that "tactics-as-plan" contradicts the essence of Marxism means not only to vulgarise Marxism in the realm of theory, but *to drag the Party backward* in practice.

Rabocheye Dyelo goes on to sermonise:

> "The task of the revolutionary Social-Democrat is only to accelerate objective development by his conscious work, not to obviate it or substitute his own subjective plans for this development. *Iskra* knows all this in theory; but the enormous importance which Marxism justly attaches to conscious revolutionary work causes it in practice, owing to its doctrinaire view of tactics, *to belittle the significance of the objective or the spontaneous element of development*" (p. 18).

Another example of the extraordinary theoretical confusion worthy of Mr. V. V. and his fraternity. We would ask our philosopher: how may a designer of subjective plans "belittle" objective development? Obviously by losing sight of the fact that this objective development creates or strength-

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* "*Ein Jahr der Verwirrung*" ("A Year of Confusion") is the title Mehring gave to the chapter of his *History of German Social-Democracy* in which he describes the hesitancy and lack of determination displayed at first by the socialists in selecting the "tactics-as-plan" for the new situation.

** Leading article in *Iskra*, No. 1. (See present edition, Vol. 4, p. 369.—*Ed.*)

ens, destroys or weakens certain classes, strata, or groups, certain nations or groups of nations, etc., and in this way serves to determine a given international political alignment of forces, or the position adopted by revolutionary parties, etc. If the designer of plans did that, his guilt would not be that he belittled the spontaneous element, but, on the contrary, that he belittled the *conscious* element, for he would then show that he lacked the "consciousness" properly to understand objective development. Hence, the very talk of "estimating the *relative* significance" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*'s italics) of spontaneity and consciousness itself reveals a complete lack of "consciousness". If certain "spontaneous elements of development" can be grasped at all by human understanding, then an incorrect estimation of them will be tantamount to "belittling the conscious element". But if they cannot be grasped, then we do not know them, and therefore cannot speak of them. What then is Krichevsky discussing? If he thinks that *Iskra*'s "subjective plans" are erroneous (as he in fact declares them to be), he should have shown what objective facts they ignore, and only then charged *Iskra* with *lacking political consciousness* for ignoring them, with "belittling the conscious element", to use his own words. If, however, displeased with subjective plans, he can bring forward no argument other than that of "belittling the spontaneous element" (!), he merely shows: (1) that, theoretically, he understands Marxism *à la* Kareyev and Mikhailovsky, who have been sufficiently ridiculed by Beltov;[170] and (2) that, practically, he is quite satisfied with the "spontaneous elements of development" that have drawn our legal Marxists towards Bernsteinism and our Social-Democrats towards Economism, and that he is "full of wrath" against those who have determined at all costs *to divert* Russian Social-Democracy from the path of "spontaneous" development.

Further, there follow things that are positively droll. "Just as human beings will reproduce in the old-fashioned way despite all the discoveries of natural science, so the birth of a new social order will come about, in the future too, *mainly* as a result of elemental outbursts, despite all the discoveries of social science and the increase in the number of conscious fighters" (p. 19). Just as our grandfathers in

their old-fashioned wisdom used to say, Anyone can bring children into the world, so today the "modern socialists" (*à la* Nartsis Tuporylov)[171] say in their wisdom, Anyone can participate in the spontaneous birth of a new social order. We too hold that anyone can. All that is required for participation of that kind is *to yield* to Economism when Economism reigns and to terrorism when terrorism arises. Thus, in the spring of this year, when it was so important to utter a note of warning against infatuation with terrorism, *Rabocheye Dyelo* stood in amazement, confronted by a problem that was "new" to it. And now, six months after, when the problem has become less topical, it presents us at one and the same time with the declaration: "We think that it is not and should not be the task of Social-Democracy to counteract the rise of terroristic sentiments" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 23), and with the Conference resolution: "The Conference regards systematic and aggressive terror as being inopportune" (*Two Conferences*, p. 18). How beautifully clear and coherent this is! Not to counteract, but to declare inopportune, and to declare it in such a way that unsystematic and defensive terror does not come within the scope of the "resolution". It must be admitted that such a resolution is extremely safe and is fully insured against error, just as a man who talks, but says nothing, insures himself against error. All that is needed to frame such a resolution is an ability to keep *at the tail-end* of the movement. When *Iskra* ridiculed *Rabocheye Dyelo* for declaring the question of terror to be new,* the latter angrily accused *Iskra* of "having the incredible effrontery to impose upon the Party organisation solutions of tactical questions proposed by a group of emigrant writers more than fifteen years ago" (p. 24). Effrontery indeed, and what an overestimation of the conscious element—first to resolve questions theoretically beforehand, and then to try to convince the organisation, the Party, and the masses of the correctness of this solution!** How much better it would be to repeat the elements and, without "imposing" anything upon anybody, swing with every

* See present volume, p. 18-20.—*Ed.*

** Nor must it be forgotten that in solving "theoretically" the problem of terror, the Emancipation of Labour group *generalised* the experience of the antecedent revolutionary movement.

"turn"—whether in the direction of Economism or in the direction of terrorism. *Rabocheye Dyelo* even generalises this great precept of worldly wisdom and accuses *Iskra* and *Zarya* of "setting up their programme against the movement, like a spirit hovering over the formless chaos" (p. 29). But what else is the function of Social-Democracy if not to be a "spirit" that not only hovers over the spontaneous movement, but also *raises* this movement *to the level of* "*its programme*"? Surely, it is not its function to drag at the *tail* of the movement. At best, this would be of no service to the movement; at worst, it would be exceedingly harmful. *Rabocheye Dyelo*, however, not only follows this "tactics-as-process", but elevates it to a principle, so that it would be more correct to describe its tendency not as opportunism, but as *tail-ism* (from the word *tail*). And it must be admitted that those who are determined always to follow behind the movement and be its tail are absolutely and forever guaranteed against "belittling the spontaneous element of development".

* * *

And so, we have become convinced that the fundamental error committed by the "new trend" in Russian Social-Democracy is its bowing to spontaneity and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a high degree of consciousness from us Social-Democrats. The greater the spontaneous upsurge of the masses and the more widespread the movement, the more rapid, incomparably so, the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organisational work of Social-Democracy.

The spontaneous upsurge of the masses in Russia proceeded (and continues) with such rapidity that the young Social-Democrats proved unprepared to meet these gigantic tasks. This unpreparedness is our common misfortune, the misfortune of *all* Russian Social-Democrats. The upsurge of the masses proceeded and spread with uninterrupted continuity; it not only continued in the places where it began, but spread to new localities and to new strata of the population (under the influence of the working-class movement, there was a renewed ferment among the student youth, among the intellectuals generally, and even among the peasantry).

Revolutionaries, however, *lagged behind* this upsurge, both in their "theories" and in their activity; they failed to establish a constant and continuous organisation capable of *leading* the whole movement.

In Chapter I, we established that *Rabocheye Dyelo* belittled our theoretical tasks and that it "spontaneously" repeated the fashionable catchword "freedom of criticism"; those who repeated this catchword lacked the "consciousness" to understand that the positions of the opportunist "Critics" and those of the revolutionaries in Germany and in Russia are diametrically opposed.

In the following chapters, we shall show how this bowing to spontaneity found expression in the sphere of the political tasks and in the organisational work of Social-Democracy.

III

TRADE-UNIONIST POLITICS AND SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

We shall again begin by praising *Rabocheye Dyelo*. "Literature of Exposure and the Proletarian Struggle" is the title Martynov gave the article on his differences with *Iskra* published in *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10. He formulated the substance of the differences as follows: "We cannot confine ourselves solely to exposing the system that stands in its [the working-class party's] path of development. We must also react to the immediate and current interests of the proletariat. ... *Iskra* ... is in fact an organ of revolutionary opposition that exposes the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs.... We, however, work and shall continue to work for the cause of the working class in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle" (p. 63). One cannot help being grateful to Martynov for this formula. It is of outstanding general interest, because substantially it embraces not only our disagreements with *Rabocheye Dyelo*, but the general disagreement between ourselves and the "Economists" on the political struggle. We have shown that the "Economists" do not altogether repudiate "politics", but that they are constantly straying from the Social-Democratic to the trade-unionist conception of politics. Martynov

strays in precisely this way, and we shall therefore take his views as a *model* of Economist error on this question. As we shall endeavour to prove, neither the authors of the "*Separate Supplement*" *to Rabochaya Mysl* nor the authors of the manifesto issued by the Self-Emancipation Group, nor the authors of the Economist letter published in *Iskra*, No. 12, will have any right to complain against this choice.

A. POLITICAL AGITATION AND ITS RESTRICTION BY THE ECONOMISTS

Everyone knows that the economic* struggle of the Russian workers underwent widespread development and consolidation simultaneously with the production of "literature" exposing economic (factory and occupational) conditions. The "leaflets" were devoted mainly to the exposure of the factory system, and very soon a veritable passion for exposures was roused among the workers. As soon as the workers realised that the Social-Democratic study circles desired to, and could, supply them with a new kind of leaflet that told the whole truth about their miserable existence, about their unbearably hard toil, and their lack of rights, they began to send in, actually flood us with, correspondence from the factories and workshops. This "exposure literature" created a tremendous sensation, not only in the particular factory exposed in the given leaflet, but in all the factories to which news of the revealed facts spread. And since the poverty and want among the workers in the various enterprises and in the various trades are much the same, the "truth about the life of the workers" stirred *everyone*. Even among the most backward workers, a veritable passion arose to "get into print"—a noble passion for this rudimentary form of war against the whole of the present social system which is based upon robbery and oppression. And in the overwhelming majority of cases these "leaflets" were in truth a declaration of

* To avoid misunderstanding, we must point out that here, and throughout this pamphlet, by economic struggle, we imply (in keeping with the accepted usage among us) the "practical economic struggle", which Engels, in the passage quoted above, described as "resistance to the capitalists", and which in free countries is known as the organised-labour syndical, or trade-union struggle.

war, because the exposures served greatly to agitate the workers; they evoked among them common demands for the removal of the most glaring outrages and roused in them a readiness to support the demands with strikes. Finally, the employers themselves were compelled to recognise the significance of these leaflets as a declaration of war, so much so that in a large number of cases they did not even wait for the outbreak of hostilities. As is always the case, the mere publication of these exposures made them effective, and they acquired the significance of a strong moral influence. On more than one occasion, the mere appearance of a leaflet proved sufficient to secure the satisfaction of all or part of the demands put forward. In a word, economic (factory) exposures were and remain an important lever in the economic struggle. And they will continue to retain this significance as long as there is capitalism, which makes it necessary for the workers to defend themselves. Even in the most advanced countries of Europe it can still be seen that the exposure of abuses in some backward trade, or in some forgotten branch of domestic industry, serves as a starting-point for the awakening of class-consciousness, for the beginning of a trade-union struggle, and for the spread of socialism.*

The overwhelming majority of Russian Social-Democrats have of late been almost entirely absorbed by this work of organising the exposure of factory conditions. Suffice it to recall *Rabochaya Mysl* to see the extent to which they have been absorbed by it—so much so, indeed, that they have

* In the present chapter we deal only with the *political* struggle, in its broader or narrower meaning. Therefore, we note only in passing, merely as a curiosity, *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s charge that *Iskra* is "too restrained" in regard to the economic struggle (*Two Conferences*, p. 27, rehashed by Martynov in his pamphlet, *Social-Democracy and the Working Class*). If the accusers computed by the hundredweights or reams (as they are so fond of doing) any given year's discussion of the economic struggle in the industrial section of *Iskra*, in comparison with the corresponding sections of *Rabocheye Dyelo* and *Rabochaya Mysl* combined, they would easily see that the latter lag behind even in this respect. Apparently, the realisation of this simple truth compels them to resort to arguments that clearly reveal their confusion. "*Iskra*," they write, "willy-nilly [!] is compelled [!] to reckon with the imperative demands of life and to publish at least [!!] correspondence about the working-class movement" (*Two Conferences*, p. 27). Now this is really a crushing argument!

lost sight of the fact that this, *taken by itself*, is in essence still not Social-Democratic work, but merely trade-union work. As a matter of fact, the exposures merely dealt with the relations between the workers *in a given trade* and their employers, and all they achieved was that the sellers of labour-power learned to sell their "commodity" on better terms and to fight the purchasers over a purely commercial deal. These exposures could have served (if properly utilised by an organisation of revolutionaries) as a beginning and a component part of Social-Democratic activity; but they could also have led (and, given a worshipful attitude towards spontaneity, were bound to lead) to a "purely trade-union" struggle and to a non-Social-Democratic working-class movement. Social-Democracy leads the struggle of the working class, not only for better terms for the sale of labour-power, but for the abolition of the social system that compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich. Social-Democracy represents the working class, not in its relation to a given group of employers alone, but in its relation to all classes of modern society and to the state as an organised political force. Hence, it follows that not only must Social-Democrats not confine themselves exclusively to the economic struggle, but that they must not allow the organisation of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must take up actively the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness. *Now* that *Zarya* and *Iskra* have made the first attack upon Economism, "all are agreed" on this (although some agree only in words, as we shall soon see).

The question arises, what should political education consist in? Can it be confined to the propaganda of working-class hostility to the autocracy? Of course not. It is not enough *to explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed (any more than it is *to explain* to them that their interests are antagonistic to the interests of the employers). Agitation must be conducted with regard to every concrete example of this oppression (as we have begun to carry on agitation round concrete examples of economic oppression). Inasmuch as *this* oppression affects the most diverse classes of society, inasmuch as it manifests itself in the most varied spheres of life and activity—vocational, civic, personal, family,

religious, scientific, etc., etc.—is it not evident that *we shall not be fulfilling our task* of developing the political consciousness of the workers if we do not *undertake* the organisation of the *political exposure* of the autocracy *in all its aspects*? In order to carry on agitation round concrete instances of oppression, these instances must be exposed (as it is necessary to expose factory abuses in order to carry on economic agitation).

One might think this to be clear enough. It turns out, however, that it is only in words that "all" are agreed on the need to develop political consciousness, *in all its aspects*. It turns out that *Rabocheye Dyelo*, for example, far from tackling the task of organising (or making a start in organising) comprehensive political exposure, is even trying *to drag Iskra*, which has undertaken this task, *away from it*. Listen to the following: "The political struggle of the working class is merely [it is certainly not "merely"] the most developed, wide, and effective form of economic struggle" (programme of *Rabocheye Dyelo*, published in issue No. 1, p. 3). "The Social-Democrats are now confronted with the task of lending the economic struggle itself, as far as possible, a political character" (Martynov, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 42). "The economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into active political struggle" (resolution adopted by the Conference of the Union Abroad and "amendments" thereto, *Two Conferences*, pp. 11 and 17). As the reader will observe, all these theses permeate *Rabocheye Dyelo* from its very first number to the latest "Instructions to the Editors", and all of them evidently express a single view regarding political agitation and struggle. Let us examine this view from the standpoint of the opinion prevailing among all Economists, that political agitation must *follow* economic agitation. Is it true that, in general,* the economic struggle "is the most widely appli-

* We say "in general", because *Rabocheye Dyelo* speaks of general principles and of the general tasks of the Party as a whole. Undoubtedly, cases occur in practice when politics really *must* follow economics, but only Economists can speak of this in a resolution intended to apply to the whole of Russia. Cases do occur when *it is possible* "right from the beginning" to carry on political agitation "exclusively on an economic basis"; yet *Rabocheye Dyelo* came in the end to

cable means" of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is entirely untrue. *Any and every* manifestation of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only in connection with the economic struggle, is not one whit less "widely applicable" as a means of "drawing in" the masses. The rural superintendents and the flogging of peasants, the corruption of the officials and the police treatment of the "common people" in the cities, the fight against the famine-stricken and the suppression of the popular striving towards enlightenment and knowledge, the extortion of taxes and the persecution of the religious sects, the humiliating treatment of soldiers and the barrack methods in the treatment of the students and liberal intellectuals—do all these and a thousand other similar manifestations of tyranny, though not directly connected with the "economic" struggle, represent, in general, *less* "widely applicable" means and occasions for political agitation and for drawing the masses into the political struggle? The very opposite is true. Of the sum-total of cases in which the workers suffer (either on their own account or on account of those closely connected with them) from tyranny, violence, and the lack of rights, undoubtedly only a small minority represent cases of police tyranny in the trade-union struggle as such. Why then should we, beforehand, *restrict* the scope of political agitation by declaring only *one* of the means to be "the most widely applicable", when Social-Democrats must have, in addition, other, generally speaking, no less "widely applicable" means?

In the dim and distant past (a full year ago!...) *Rabocheye Dyelo* wrote: "The masses begin to understand immediate political demands after one strike, or at all events, after several", "as soon as the government sets the police and gendarmerie against them" [*August* (No. 7) 1900, p. 15]. This opportunist theory of stages has now been rejected by the Union Abroad, which makes a concession to us by declaring: "There is no need whatever to conduct political agitation

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the conclusion that "there is no need for this whatever" (*Two Conferences*, p. 11). In the following chapter, we shall show that the tactics of the "politicians" and revolutionaries not only do not ignore the trade-union tasks of Social-Democracy, but that, on the contrary, they alone *can secure* their consistent fulfilment.

right from the beginning, exclusively on an economic basis" (*Two Conferences*, p. 11). The Union's repudiation of part of its former errors will show the future historian of Russian Social-Democracy better than any number of lengthy arguments the depths to which our Economists have degraded socialism! But the Union Abroad must be very naïve indeed to imagine that the abandonment of one form of restricting politics will induce us to agree to another form. Would it not be more logical to say, in this case too, that the economic struggle should be conducted on the widest possible basis, that it should always be utilised for political agitation, but that "there is no need whatever" to regard the economic struggle as the *most* widely applicable means of drawing the masses into active political struggle?

The Union Abroad attaches significance to the fact that it has substituted the phrase "most widely applicable means" for the phrase "the best means" contained in one of the resolutions of the Fourth Congress of the Jewish Workers' Union (Bund). We confess that we find it difficult to say which of these resolutions is the better one. In our opinion they are *both worse*. Both the Union Abroad and the Bund fall into the error (partly, perhaps unconsciously, under the influence of tradition) of giving an Economist, trade-unionist interpretation to politics. Whether this is done by employing the word "best" or the words "most widely applicable" makes no essential difference whatever. Had the Union Abroad said that "political agitation on an economic basis" is the most widely applied (not "applicable") means, it would have been right in regard to a certain period in the development of our Social-Democratic movement. It would have been right in regard to the *Economists* and to many (if not the majority) of the practical workers of 1898-1901; for these practical Economists *applied* political agitation (to the extent that they applied it at all) *almost exclusively on an economic basis*. Political agitation on *such* lines was recognised and, as we have seen, even recommended by *Rabochaya Mysl* and the Self-Emancipation Group. *Rabocheye Dyelo* should have *strongly condemned* the fact that the useful work of economic agitation was accompanied by the harmful restriction of the political struggle; instead, it declares the means most widely *applied* (*by the Economists*) to be the most

widely *applicable*! It is not surprising that when we call these people Economists, they can do nothing but pour every manner of abuse upon us; call us "mystifiers", "disrupters", "papal nuncios", and "slanderers"*; go complaining to the whole world that we have mortally offended them; and declare almost on oath that "not a single Social-Democratic organisation is now tinged with Economism".** Oh, those evil, slanderous politicians! They must have deliberately invented this Economism, out of sheer hatred of mankind, in order mortally to offend other people.

What concrete, real meaning attaches to Martynov's words when he sets before Social-Democracy the task of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character"? The economic struggle is the collective struggle of the workers against their employers for better terms *in the sale of their labour-power*, for better living and working conditions. This struggle is necessarily a trade-union struggle, because working conditions differ greatly in different trades, and, consequently, the struggle *to improve* them can only be conducted on the basis of trade organisations (in the Western countries, through trade unions; in Russia, through temporary trade associations and through leaflets, etc.). Lending "the economic struggle itself a political character" means, therefore, striving to secure satisfaction of these trade demands, the improvement of working conditions in each separate trade by means of "legislative and administrative measures" (as Martynov puts it on the ensuing page of his article, p. 43). This is precisely what all workers' trade unions do and always have done. Read the works of the soundly scientific (and "soundly" opportunist) Mr. and Mrs. Webb and you will see that the British trade unions long ago recognised, and have long been carrying out, the task of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character"; they have long been fighting for the right to strike, for the removal of all legal hindrances to the co-operative and trade-union movements, for laws to protect women and children, for the improvement of labour conditions by means of health and factory legislation, etc.

* These are the precise expressions used in *Two Conferences*, pp. 31, 32, 28 and 80.

** *Two Conferences*, p. 32.

Thus, the pompous phrase about "lending the economic struggle *itself* a political character", which sounds so "terrifically" profound and revolutionary, serves as a screen to conceal what is in fact the traditional striving *to degrade* Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade-union politics. Under the guise of rectifying the one-sidedness of *Iskra*, which, it is alleged, places "the revolutionising of dogma higher than the revolutionising of life",* we are presented with the *struggle for economic reforms* as if it were something entirely new. In point of fact, the phrase "lending the economic struggle itself a political character" means nothing more than the struggle for economic reforms. Martynov himself might have come to this simple conclusion, had he pondered over the significance of his own words. "Our Party," he says, training his heaviest guns on *Iskra*, "could and should have presented concrete demands to the government for legislative and administrative measures against economic exploitation, unemployment, famine, etc." (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, pp. 42-43). Concrete demands for measures—does not this mean demands for social reforms? Again we ask the impartial reader: Are we slandering the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ites (may I be forgiven for this awkward, currently used designation!) by calling them concealed Bernsteinians when, as their point of *disagreement* with *Iskra*, they advance their thesis on the necessity of struggling for economic reforms?

Revolutionary Social-Democracy has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities. But it utilises "economic" agitation for the purpose of presenting to the government, not only demands for all sorts of measures, but also (and primarily) the demand that it cease to be an autocratic government. Moreover, it considers it its duty to present this demand to the government on the basis, not of the economic struggle *alone*, but of all manifestations in general of public and political life. In a word,

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* *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 60. This is the Martynov variation of the application, which we have characterised above, of the thesis "every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes" to the present chaotic state of our movement. In fact, this is merely a translation into Russian of the notorious Bernsteinian sentence: "The movement is everything, the final aim is nothing."

it subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for socialism. Martynov, however, resuscitates the theory of stages in a new form and strives to prescribe, as it were, an exclusively economic path of development for the political struggle. By advancing at this moment, when the revolutionary movement is on the upgrade, an alleged special "task" of struggling for reforms, he is dragging the Party backwards and is playing into the hands of both "Economist" and liberal opportunism.

To proceed. Shamefacedly hiding the struggle for reforms behind the pompous thesis of "lending the economic struggle itself a political character", Martynov advanced, as if it were a special point, *exclusively economic* (indeed, exclusively factory) *reforms*. As to the reason for his doing that, we do not know it. Carelessness, perhaps? Yet if he had in mind something else besides "factory" reforms, then the whole of his thesis, which we have cited, loses all sense. Perhaps he did it because he considers it possible and probable that the government will make "concessions" only in the economic sphere?* If so, then it is a strange delusion. Concessions are also possible and are made in the sphere of legislation concerning flogging, passports, land redemption payments, religious sects, the censorship, etc., etc. "Economic" concessions (or pseudo-concessions) are, of course, the cheapest and most advantageous from the government's point of view, because by these means it hopes to win the confidence of the working masses. For this very reason, we Social-Democrats *must not* under any circumstances or in any way whatever create grounds for the belief (or the misunderstanding) that we attach greater value to economic reforms, or that we regard them as being particularly important, etc. "Such demands," writes Martynov, speaking of the concrete demands for legislative and administrative measures referred to above, "would not be merely a hollow sound, because, promising certain palpable results, they might be actively supported by the working masses...." We are not Economists,

* P. 43. "Of course, when we advise the workers to present certain economic demands to the government, we do so because in the economic sphere the autocratic government is, of necessity, prepared to make certain concessions!"

oh no! We only cringe as slavishly before the "palpableness" of concrete results as do the Bernsteins, the Prokopoviches, the Struves, the R. M.'s, and *tutti quanti*! We only wish to make it understood (together with Nartsis Tuporylov) that all which "does not promise palpable results" is merely a "hollow sound"! We are only trying to argue as if the working masses were incapable (and had not already proved their capabilities, notwithstanding those who ascribe their own philistinism to them) of actively supporting every protest against the autocracy, even if it *promises absolutely no palpable results whatever*!

Let us take, for example, the very "measures" for the relief of unemployment and the famine that Martynov himself advances. *Rabocheye Dyelo* is engaged, judging by what it has promised, in drawing up and elaborating a programme of "concrete [in the form of bills?] demands for legislative and administrative measures", "promising palpable results", while *Iskra*, which "constantly places the revolutionising of dogma higher than the revolutionising of life", has tried to explain the inseparable connection between unemployment and the whole capitalist system, has given warning that "famine is coming", has exposed the police "fight against the famine-stricken", and the outrageous "provisional penal servitude regulations"; and *Zarya* has published a special reprint, in the form of an agitational pamphlet, of a section of its "Review of Home Affairs", dealing with the famine.* But good God! How "one-sided" were these incorrigibly narrow and orthodox doctrinaires, how deaf to the calls of "life itself"! Their articles contained—oh horror!—*not a single*, can you imagine it? not a single "concrete demand" "promising palpable results"! Poor doctrinaires! They ought to be sent to Krichevsky and Martynov to be taught that tactics are a process of growth, of that which grows, etc., and that the economic struggle *itself* should be given a political character!

"In addition to its immediate revolutionary significance, the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government ["*economic* struggle against the government"!] has also this significance: it constantly brings home

* See present volume, pp. 253-74.—*Ed.*

to the workers the fact that they have no political rights" (Martynov, p. 44). We quote this passage, not in order to repeat for the hundredth and thousandth time what has been said above, but in order to express particular thanks to Martynov for this excellent new formula: "the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government". What a gem! With what inimitable skill and mastery in eliminating all partial disagreements and shades of differences among Economists this clear and concise proposition expresses the *quintessence* of Economism, from summoning the workers "to the political struggle, which they carry on in the general interest, for the improvement of the conditions of all the workers",* continuing through the theory of stages, and ending in the resolution of the Conference on the "most widely applicable", etc. "Economic struggle against the government" is precisely trade-unionist politics, which is still very far from being Social-Democratic politics.

B. HOW MARTYNOV RENDERED PLEKHANOV MORE PROFOUND

"What a large number of Social-Democratic Lomonosovs have appeared among us lately!" observed a comrade one day, having in mind the astonishing propensity of many who are inclined toward Economism to, arrive, "necessarily, by their own under standing", at great truths (e.g., that the economic struggle stimulates the workers to ponder over their lack of rights) and in doing so to ignore, with the supreme contempt of born geniuses, all that has been produced by the antecedent development of revolutionary thought and of the revolutionary movement. Lomonosov-Martynov is precisely such a born genius. We need but glance at his article "Urgent Questions" to see how by "his own understanding" he *arrives at* what was long ago said by Axelrod (of whom our Lomonosov, naturally, says not a word); how, for instance, he *is beginning* to understand that we cannot ignore the opposition of such or such strata of the bourgeoisie (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 9, pp. 61, 62, 71; compare this with *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s *Reply* to Axelrod, pp. 22, 23-24),

* *Rabochaya Mysl*, "*Separate Supplement*", p. 14.

etc. But alas, he is only "arriving" and is only "beginning", not more than that, for so little has he understood Axelrod's ideas, that he talks about "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". For three years (1898-1901) *Rabocheye Dyelo* has tried hard to understand Axelrod, but has so far not understood him! Can one of the reasons be that Social-Democracy, "like mankind", always sets itself only tasks that can be achieved?

But the Lomonosovs are distinguished not only by their ignorance of many things (that would be but half misfortune!), but also by their unawareness of their own ignorance. Now this is a real misfortune; and it is this misfortune that prompts them without further ado to attempt to render Plekhanov "more profound".

"Much water," Lomonosov-Martynov says, "has flowed under the bridge since Plekhanov wrote his book [*Tasks of the Socialists in the Fight Against the Famine in Russia*]. The Social-Democrats who for a decade led the economic struggle of the working class ... have failed as yet to lay down a broad theoretical basis for Party tactics. This question has now come to a head, and if we should wish to lay down such a theoretical basis, we should certainly have to deepen considerably the principles of tactics developed at one time by Plekhanov.... Our present definition of the distinction between propaganda and agitation would have to be different from Plekhanov's [Martynov has just quoted Plekhanov's words: "A propagandist presents many ideas to one or a few persons; an agitator presents only one or a few ideas, but he presents them to a mass of people."] By propaganda we would understand the revolutionary explanation of the present social system, entire or in its partial manifestations, whether that be done in a form intelligible to individuals or to broad masses. By agitation, in the strict sense of the word [*sic*!], we would understand the call upon the masses to undertake definite, concrete actions and the promotion of the direct revolutionary intervention of the proletariat in social life."

We congratulate Russian—and international—Social-Democracy on having found, thanks to Martynov, a new terminology, more strict and more profound. Hitherto we thought (with Plekhanov, and with all the leaders of the international working-class movement) that the propagandist, dealing with, say, the question of unemployment, must explain the capitalistic nature of crises, the cause of their inevitability in modern society, the necessity for the transformation of this society into a socialist society, etc. In a word, he must present "many ideas", so many, indeed, that

they will be understood as an integral whole only by a (comparatively) few persons. The agitator, however, speaking on the same subject, will take as an illustration a fact that is most glaring and most widely known to his audience, say, the death of an unemployed worker's family from starvation, the growing impoverishment, etc., and, utilising this fact, known to all, will direct his efforts to presenting *a single idea* to the "masses", e.g., the senselessness of the contradiction between the increase of wealth and the increase of poverty; he will strive *to rouse* discontent and indignation among the masses against this crying injustice, leaving a more complete explanation of this contradiction to the propagandist. Consequently, the propagandist operates chiefly by means of the *printed* word; the agitator by means of the *spoken* word. The propagandist requires qualities different from those of the agitator. Kautsky and Lafargue, for example, we term propagandists; Bebel and Guesde we term agitators. To single out a third sphere, or third function, of practical activity, and to include in this function "the call upon the masses to undertake definite concrete actions", is sheer nonsense, because the "call", as a single act, either naturally and inevitably supplements the theoretical treatise, propagandist pamphlet, and agitational speech, or represents a purely executive function. Let us take, for example, the struggle the German Social-Democrats are now waging against the corn duties. The theoreticians write research works on tariff policy, with the "call", say, to struggle for commercial treaties and for Free Trade. The propagandist does the same thing in the periodical press, and the agitator in public speeches. At the present time, the "concrete action" of the masses takes the form of signing petitions to the Reichstag against raising the corn duties. The call for this action comes indirectly from the theoreticians, the propagandists, and the agitators, and, directly, from the workers who take the petition lists to the factories and to private homes for the gathering of signatures. According to the "Martynov terminology", Kautsky and Bebel are both propagandists, while those who solicit the signatures are agitators. Isn't it clear?

The German example recalled to my mind the German word "Verballhornung", which, literally translated, means

"Ballhorning". Johann Ballhorn, a Leipzig publisher of the sixteenth century, published a child's reader in which, as was the custom, he introduced a drawing of a cock, but a cock without spurs and with a couple of eggs lying near it. On the cover he printed the legend, "*Revised* edition by Johann Ballhorn". Ever since then, the Germans describe any "revision" that is really a worsening as "ballhorning". And one cannot help recalling Ballhorn upon seeing how the Martynovs try to render Plekhanov "more profound".

Why did our Lomonosov "invent" this confusion? In order to illustrate how *Iskra* "devotes attention only to one side of the case, just as Plekhanov did a decade and a half ago" (39). "With *Iskra*, propagandist tasks force agitational tasks into the background, at least for the present" (52). If we translate this last proposition from the language of Martynov into ordinary human language (because mankind has not yet managed to learn the newly-invented terminology), we shall get the following: with *Iskra*, the tasks of political propaganda and political agitation force into the background the task of "presenting to the government concrete demands for legislative and administrative measures" that "promise certain palpable results" (or demands for social reforms, that is, if we are permitted once again to employ the old terminology of the old mankind not yet grown to Martynov's level). We suggest that the reader compare this thesis with the following tirade:

> "What also astonishes us in these programmes [the programmes advanced by revolutionary Social-Democrats] is their constant stress upon the benefits of workers' activity in parliament [non-existent in Russia], though they completely ignore [thanks to their revolutionary nihilism] the importance of workers' participation in the legislative manufacturers' assemblies on factory affairs [which do exist in Russia] ... or at least the importance of workers' participation in municipal bodies...."

The author of this tirade expresses in a somewhat more forthright and clearer manner the very idea which Lomonosov-Martynov discovered by his own understanding. The author is R. M., in the "*Separate Supplement*" *to Rabochaya Mysl* (p. 15).

C. POLITICAL EXPOSURES AND "TRAINING IN REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY"

In advancing against *Iskra* his theory of "raising the activity of the working masses", Martynov actually betrayed an urge *to belittle* that activity, for he declared the very economic struggle before which all economists grovel to be the preferable, particularly important, and "most widely applicable" means of rousing this activity and its broadest field. This error is characteristic, precisely in that it is by no means peculiar to Martynov. In reality, it is possible to "raise the activity of the working masses" *only* when this activity *is not restricted* to "political agitation on an economic basis". A basic condition for the necessary expansion of political agitation is the organisation of *comprehensive* political exposure. *In no way* except by means of such exposures can the masses be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity. Hence, activity of this kind is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even political freedom does not in any way eliminate exposures; it merely shifts somewhat their sphere of direction. Thus, the German party is especially strengthening its positions and spreading its influence, thanks particularly to the untiring energy with which it is conducting its campaign of political exposure. Working-class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected—unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic point of view and no other. The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe *every* other social class in *all* the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata, and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation, and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats; for the self-knowledge of the working class is indissolubly bound up, not solely with a fully clear theo-

retical understanding—or rather, not so much with the theoretical, as with the practical, understanding—of the relationships between *all* the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life. For this reason the conception of the economic struggle as the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into the political movement, which our Economists preach, is so extremely harmful and reactionary in its practical significance. In order to become a Social-Democrat, the worker must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the vagabond; he must know their strong and weak points; he must grasp the meaning of all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum *camouflages* its selfish strivings and its real "inner workings"; he must understand what interests are reflected by certain institutions and certain laws and how they are reflected. But this "clear picture" cannot be obtained from any book. It can be obtained only from living examples and from exposures that follow close upon what is going on about us at a given moment; upon what is being discussed, in whispers perhaps, by each one in his own way; upon what finds expression in such and such events, in such and such statistics, in such and such court sentences, etc., etc. These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.

Why do the Russian workers still manifest little revolutionary activity in response to the brutal treatment of the people by the police, the persecution of religious sects, the flogging of peasants, the outrageous censorship, the torture of soldiers, the persecution of the most innocent cultural undertakings, etc.? Is it because the "economic struggle" does not "stimulate" them to this, because such activity does not "promise palpable results", because it produces little that is "positive"? To adopt such an opinion, we repeat, is merely to direct the charge where it does not belong, to blame the working masses for one's own philistinism (or Bernsteinism). We must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for still being unable to organise

sufficiently wide, striking, and rapid exposures of all the shameful outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the most backward worker will understand, *or will feel*, that the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life. Feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to react, and he will know how to hoot the censors one day, on another day to demonstrate outside the house of a governor who has brutally suppressed a peasant uprising, on still another day to teach a lesson to the gendarmes in surplices who are doing the work of the Holy Inquisition, etc. As yet we have done very little, almost nothing, *to bring* before the working masses prompt exposures on all possible issues. Many of us as yet do not recognise this as our *bounden duty* but trail spontaneously in the wake of the "drab everyday struggle", in the narrow confines of factory life. Under such circumstances to say that "*Iskra* displays a tendency to minimise the significance of the forward march of the drab everyday struggle in comparison with the propaganda of brilliant and complete ideas" (Martynov, op. cit., p. 61), means to drag the Party back, to defend and glorify our unpreparedness and backwardness.

As for calling the masses to action, that will come of itself as soon as energetic political agitation, live and striking exposures come into play. To catch some criminal red-handed and immediately to brand him publicly in all places is of itself far more effective than any number of "calls"; the effect very often is such as will make it impossible to tell exactly who it was that "called" upon the masses and who suggested this or that plan of demonstration, etc. Calls for action, not in the general, but in the concrete, sense of the term can be made only at the place of action; only those who themselves go into action, and do so immediately, can sound such calls. Our business as Social-Democratic publicists is to deepen, expand, and intensify political exposures and political agitation.

A word in passing about "calls to action". *The only newspaper* which *prior to* the spring events *called upon* the workers to intervene actively in a matter that certainly did not *promise* any *palpable results* whatever for the workers, i.e.,

the drafting of the students into the army, *was Iskra*. Immediately after the publication of the order of January 11, on "drafting the 183 students into the army", *Iskra* published an article on the matter (in its February issue, No. 2),* and, *before* any demonstration was begun, forthwith *called upon* "the workers to go to the aid of the students", called upon the "people" openly to take up the government's arrogant challenge. We ask: how is the remarkable fact to be explained that although Martynov talks so much about "calls to action", and even suggests "calls to action" as a special form of activity, he said not a word about *this* call? After this, was it not sheer philistinism on Martynov's part to allege that *Iskra* was *one-sided* because it did not issue sufficient "calls" to struggle for demands "promising palpable results"?

Our Economists, including *Rabocheye Dyelo*, were successful because they adapted themselves to the backward workers. But the Social-Democratic worker, the revolutionary worker (and the number of such workers is growing) will indignantly reject all this talk about struggle for demands "promising palpable results", etc., because he will understand that this is only a variation of the old song about adding a kopek to the ruble. Such a worker will say to his counsellors from *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*: you are busying yourselves in vain, gentlemen, and shirking your proper duties, by meddling with such excessive zeal in a job that we can very well manage ourselves. There is nothing clever in your assertion that the Social-Democrats' task is to lend the economic struggle itself a political character; that is only the beginning, it is not the main task of the Social-Democrats. For all over the world, including Russia, *the police themselves often take the initiative in lending* the economic struggle a political character, and the workers themselves learn to understand whom the government supports.** The "economic struggle of the workers

* See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 414-19.—*Ed.*

** The demand "to lend the economic struggle itself a political character" most strikingly expresses *subservience to spontaneity* in the sphere of political activity. Very often the economic struggle *spontaneously* assumes a political character, that is to say, without the intervention of the "revolutionary bacilli—the intelligentsia", without the

against the employers and the government", about which you make as much fuss as if you had discovered a new America, is being waged in all parts of Russia, even the most remote, by the workers themselves who have heard about strikes, but who have heard almost nothing about socialism. The "activity" you want to stimulate among us workers, by advancing concrete demands that promise palpable results, we are already displaying and in our everyday, limited trade-union work we put forward these concrete demands, very often without any assistance whatever from the intellectuals. But *such* activity is not enough for us; we are not children to be fed on the thin gruel of "economic" politics alone; we want to know everything that others know, we want to learn the details of *all* aspects of political life and to take part *actively* in every single political event. In order that we may do this, the intellectuals must talk to us less of what we already know.* and tell us more about what we do not yet know

intervention of the class-conscious Social-Democrats. The economic struggle of the English workers, for instance, also assumed a political character without any intervention on the part of the socialists. The task of the Social-Democrats, however, is not exhausted by political agitation on an economic basis; their task is *to convert* trade-unionist politics into Social-Democratic political struggle, *to utilise* the sparks of political consciousness which the economic struggle generates among the workers, for the purpose of *raising* the workers to the level of *Social-Democratic* political consciousness. The Martynovs, however, instead of raising and stimulating the spontaneously awakening political consciousness of the workers, *bow to spontaneity* and repeat over and over *ad nauseam*, that the economic struggle "impels" the workers to realise their own lack of political rights. It is unfortunate, gentlemen, that the spontaneously awakening trade-unionist political consciousness does not "*impel*" you to an understanding of your Social-Democratic tasks.

* To prove that this imaginary speech of a worker to an Economist is based on fact, we shall refer to two witnesses who undoubtedly have direct knowledge of the working-class movement and who are least of all inclined to be partial towards us "doctrinaires"; for one witness is an Economist (who regards even *Rabocheye Dyelo* as a political organ!), and the other is a terrorist. The first witness is the author of a remarkably truthful and vivid article entitled "The St. Petersburg Working-Class Movement and the Practical Tasks of Social-Democracy", published in *Rabocheye Dyelo* No. 6. He divides the workers into the following categories: (1) class-conscious revolutionaries; (2) intermediate stratum; (3) the remaining masses. The intermediate stratum, he says, "is often more interested in questions of political life than in its own immediate economic interests, the connection

and what we can never learn from our factory and "economic" experience, namely, political knowledge. You intellectuals can acquire this knowledge, and it is your *duty* to bring it to us in a hundred- and a thousand-fold greater measure than you have done up to now; and you must bring it to us, not only in the form of discussions, pamphlets, and articles (which very often—pardon our frankness—are rather dull), but precisely in the form of vivid *exposures* of what our government and our governing classes are doing at this very moment in all spheres of life. Devote more zeal to carrying out this duty and *talk less about "raising the activity of the working masses"*. We are far more active than you think, and we are quite able to support, by open street fighting, even demands that do not promise any "palpable results" whatever. It is not for you to "raise" our activity, because *activity is precisely the thing you yourselves lack*. Bow less in subservience to spontaneity, and think more about raising *your own* activity, gentlemen!

D. WHAT IS THERE IN COMMON BETWEEN ECONOMISM AND TERRORISM?

In the last footnote we cited the opinion of an Economist and of a non-Social-Democratic terrorist, who showed themselves to be accidentally in agreement. Speaking generally, however, there is not an accidental, but a necessary, inherent connection between the two, of which we shall have need to speak later, and which must be mentioned here in

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between which and the general social conditions it has long understood".... *Rabochaya Mysl* "is sharply criticised": "It keeps on repeating the same thing over and over again, things we have long known, read long ago." "Again nothing in the political review!" (pp. 30-31). But even the third stratum, "the younger and more sensitive section of the workers, less corrupted by the tavern and the church, who hardly ever have the opportunity of getting hold of political literature, discuss political events in a rambling way and ponder over the fragmentary news they get about student riots", etc. The terrorist writes as follows: "... They read over once or twice the petty details of factory life in other towns, not their own, and then they read no more ... dull, they find it.... To say nothing in a workers' paper about the government ... is to regard the workers as being little children.... The workers are not little children" (*Svoboda*, published by the Revolutionary-Socialist Group, pp. 69-70).

connection with the question of education for revolutionary activity. The Economists and the present-day terrorists have one common root, namely, *subservience to spontaneity*, with which we dealt in the preceding chapter as a general phenomenon and which we shall now examine in relation to its effect upon political activity and the political struggle. At first sight, our assertion may appear paradoxical, so great is the difference between those who stress the "drab everyday struggle" and those who call for the most self-sacrificing struggle of individuals. But this is no paradox. The Economists and the terrorists merely bow to different poles of spontaneity; the Economists bow to the spontaneity of "the labour movement pure and simple", while the terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the passionate indignation of intellectuals, who lack the ability or opportunity to connect the revolutionary struggle and the working-class movement into an integral whole. It is difficult indeed for those who have lost their belief, or who have never believed, that this is possible, to find some outlet for their indignation and revolutionary energy other than terror. Thus, both forms of subservience to spontaneity we have mentioned are nothing but *the beginning of the implementation* of the notorious *Credo* programme: Let the workers wage their "economic struggle against the employers and the government" (we apologise to the author of the *Credo* for expressing her views in Martynov's words. We think we have a right to do so since the *Credo*, too, says that in the economic struggle the workers "come up against the political régime"), and let the intellectuals conduct the political struggle by their own efforts—with the aid of terror, of course! This is an absolutely logical and inevitable *conclusion* which must be insisted on—*even though those* who are beginning to carry out this programme *do not themselves realise* that it is inevitable. Political activity has its logic quite apart from the consciousness of those who, with the best intentions, call either for terror or for lending the economic struggle itself a political character. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, and, in this case, good intentions cannot save one from being spontaneously drawn "along the line of least resistance", along the line of the *purely bourgeois Credo* programme. Surely it is no accident either that many Rus-

sian liberals—avowed liberals and liberals that wear the mask of Marxism—whole-heartedly sympathise with terror and try to foster the terrorist moods that have surged up in the present time.

The formation of the Revolutionary-Socialist *Svoboda* Group—which set itself the aim of helping the working-class movement in every possible way, but which included in its *programme* terror, and emancipation, so to speak, from Social-Democracy—once again confirmed the remarkable perspicacity of P. B. Axelrod, who *literally foretold* these results of Social-Democratic waverings *as far back as the end of 1897* (*Present Tasks and Tactics*), when he outlined his famous "two perspectives". All the subsequent disputes and disagreements among Russian Social-Democrats are contained, like a plant in the seed, in these two perspectives.*

From this point of view it also becomes clear why *Rabocheye Dyelo*, unable to withstand the spontaneity of Economism, has likewise been unable to withstand the spontaneity of terrorism. It is highly interesting to note here the specific arguments that *Svoboda* has advanced in defence of terrorism. It "completely denies" the deterrent role of terrorism (*The Regeneration of Revolutionism*, p. 64), but instead stresses its "excitative significance". This is characteristic, first, as representing one of the stages of the break-up and decline of the traditional (pre-Social-Democratic) cycle of ideas which insisted upon terrorism. The admission

* Martynov "conceives of another, more realistic [?] dilemma" (*Social-Democracy and the Working Class*, p. 19): "Either Social-Democracy takes over the direct leadership of the economic struggle of the proletariat and by that [!] transforms it into a revolutionary class struggle...." "By that", i.e., apparently by the direct leadership of the economic struggle. Can Martynov cite an instance in which leading the trade-union struggle *alone* has succeeded in transforming a trade-unionist movement into a revolutionary class movement? Can he not understand that in order to bring about this "transformation" we must actively take up the "direct leadership" of *all-sided* political agitation?... "Or the other perspective: Social-Democracy refrains from assuming the leadership of the economic struggle of the workers and so ... clips its own wings..." In *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s opinion, quoted above, it is *Iskra* that "refrains". We have seen, however, that the latter *does far more than Rabocheye Dyelo* to lead the economic struggle, but that, moreover, it does not confine itself thereto and *does not narrow down* its political tasks for its sake.

that the government cannot now be "terrified", and hence disrupted, by terror, is tantamount to a complete condemnation of terror as a system of struggle, as a sphere of activity sanctioned by the programme. Secondly, it is still more characteristic as an example of the failure to understand our immediate tasks in regard to "education for revolutionary activity". *Svoboda* advocates terror as a means of "exciting" the working-class movement and of giving it a "strong impetus". It is difficult to imagine an argument that more thoroughly disproves itself. Are there not enough outrages committed in Russian life without special "excitants" having to be invented? On the other hand, is it not obvious that those who are not, and cannot be, roused to excitement even by Russian tyranny will stand by "twiddling their thumbs" and watch a handful of terrorists engaged in single combat with the government? The fact is that the working masses are roused to a high pitch of excitement by the social evils in Russian life, but we are unable to gather, if one may so put it, and concentrate all these drops and streamlets of popular resentment that are brought forth to a far larger extent than we imagine by the conditions of Russian life, and that must be combined into a *single* gigantic torrent. That this can be accomplished is irrefutably proved by the enormous growth of the working-class movement and the eagerness, noted above, with which the workers clamour for political literature. On the other hand, calls for terror and calls to lend the economic struggle itself a political character are merely two different forms of *evading* the most pressing duty now resting upon Russian revolutionaries, namely, the organisation of comprehensive political agitation. *Svoboda* desires *to substitute* terror for agitation, openly admitting that "as soon as intensified and strenuous agitation is begun among the masses the excitative function of terror will be ended" (*The Regeneration of Revolutionism*, p. 68). This proves precisely that both the terrorists and the Economists *underestimate* the revolutionary activity of the masses, despite the striking evidence of the events that took place in the spring,* and whereas the one group goes out in

* The big street demonstrations which began in the spring of *1901*. (Author's note to the 1907 edition.—*Ed*.)

search of artificial "excitants", the other talks about "concrete demands". But both fail to devote sufficient attention to the development of *their own activity* in political agitation and in the organisation of political exposures. And no other work can serve as a *substitute* for this task either at the present time or at any other.

E. THE WORKING CLASS AS VANGUARD FIGHTER FOR DEMOCRACY

We have seen that the conduct of the broadest political agitation and, consequently, of all-sided political exposures is an absolutely necessary and a *paramount* task of our activity, if this activity is to be truly Social-Democratic. However, we arrived at this conclusion *solely* on the grounds of the pressing needs of the working class for political knowledge and political training. But such a presentation of the question is too narrow, for it ignores the general democratic tasks of Social-Democracy, in particular of present-day Russian Social-Democracy. In order to explain the point more concretely we shall approach the subject from an aspect that is "nearest" to the Economist, namely, from the practical aspect. "Everyone agrees" that it is necessary to develop the political consciousness of the working class. The question is, *how* that is to be done and what is required to do it. The economic struggle merely "impels" the workers to realise the government's attitude towards the working class. Consequently, *however much we may try* to "lend the economic, struggle itself a political character", we *shall never be able* to develop the political consciousness of the workers (to the level of Social-Democratic political consciousness) by keeping within the framework of the economic struggle, for *that framework is too narrow*. The Martynov formula has some value for us, not because it illustrates Martynov's aptitude for confusing things, but because it pointedly expresses the basic error that all the Economists commit, namely, their conviction that it is possible to develop the class political consciousness of the workers *from within*, so to speak, from their economic struggle, i.e., by making this struggle the exclusive (or, at least, the main) starting-point, by making it the exclusive (or, at least,

the main) basis. Such a view is radically wrong. Piqued by our polemics against them, the Economists refuse to ponder deeply over the origins of these disagreements, with the result that we simply cannot understand one another. It is as if we spoke in different tongues.

Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes. For that reason, the reply to the question as to what must be done to bring political knowledge to the workers cannot be merely the answer with which, in the majority of cases, the practical workers, especially those inclined towards Economism, mostly content themselves, namely: "To go among the workers." To bring political knowledge to the *workers* the Social-Democrats must *go among all classes of the population*; they must dispatch units of their army *in all directions*.

We deliberately select this blunt formula, we deliberately express ourselves in this sharply simplified manner, not because we desire to indulge in paradoxes, but in order to "impel" the Economists to a realisation of their tasks which they unpardonably ignore, to suggest to them strongly the difference between trade-unionist and Social-Democratic politics, which they refuse to understand. We therefore beg the reader not to get wrought up, but to hear us patiently to the end.

Let us take the type of Social-Democratic study circle that has become most widespread in the past few years and examine its work. It has "contacts with the workers" and rests content with this, issuing leaflets in which abuses in the factories, the government's partiality towards the capitalists, and the tyranny of the police are strongly condemned. At workers' meetings the discussions never, or rarely ever, go beyond the limits of these subjects. Extremely rare are the lectures and discussions held on the history of the revolutionary movement, on questions of the government's home and foreign policy, on questions of the economic evo-

lution of Russia and of Europe, on the position of the various classes in modern society, etc. As to systematically acquiring and extending contact with other classes of society, no one even dreams of that. In fact, the ideal leader, as the majority of the members of such circles picture him, is something far more in the nature of a trade-union secretary than a socialist political leader. For the secretary of any, say English, trade union always helps the workers to carry on the economic struggle, he helps them to expose factory abuses, explains the injustice of the laws and of measures that hamper the freedom to strike and to picket (i.e., to warn all and sundry that a strike is proceeding at a certain factory), explains the partiality of arbitration court judges who belong to the bourgeois classes, etc., etc. In a word, every trade-union secretary conducts and helps to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". It cannot be too strongly maintained that *this is still not* Social-Democracy, that the Social-Democrat's ideal should not be the trade-union secretary, but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. Compare, for example, a leader like Robert Knight (the well-known secretary and leader of the Boiler-Makers' Society, one of the most powerful trade unions in England), with Wilhelm Liebknecht, and try to apply to them the contrasts that Martynov draws in his controversy with *Iskra*. You will see—I am running through Martynov's article—that Robert Knight engaged more in "calling the masses to certain concrete actions" (Martynov, op. cit., p. 39), while Wilhelm Liebknecht engaged more in "the revolutionary elucidation of the whole of the present system or partial manifestations of it" (38-39); that Robert Knight "formulated the immediate demands of the proletariat and indicated the means

by which they can be achieved" (41), whereas Wilhelm Liebknecht, while doing this, did not hold back from "simultaneously guiding the activities of various opposition strata", "dictating a positive programme of action for them"* (41); that Robert Knight strove "as far as possible to lend the economic struggle itself a political character" (42) and was excellently able "to submit to the government concrete demands promising certain palpable results" (43), whereas Liebknecht engaged to a much greater degree in "one-sided" "exposures" (40); that Robert Knight attached more significance to the "forward march of the drab everyday struggle" (61), whereas Liebknecht attached more significance to the "propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas" (61); that Liebknecht converted the paper he was directing into "an organ of revolutionary opposition that exposed the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs, insofar as it affected the interests of the most varied strata of the population" (63), whereas Robert Knight "worked for the cause of the working class in close organic connection with the proletarian struggle" (63)—if by "close and organic connection" is meant the subservience to spontaneity which we examined above, by taking the examples of Krichevsky and Martynov—and "restricted the sphere of his influence", convinced, of course, as is Martynov, that "by doing so he deepened that influence" (63). In a word, you will see that *de facto* Martynov reduces Social-Democracy to the level of trade-unionism, though he does so, of course, not because he does not desire the good of Social-Democracy, but simply because he is a little too much in a hurry to render Plekhanov more profound, instead of taking the trouble to understand him.

Let us return, however, to our theses. We said that a Social-Democrat, if he really believes it necessary to develop comprehensively the political consciousness of the proletariat, must "go among all classes of the population". This gives rise to the questions: how is this to be done? have we enough forces to do this? is there a basis for such work among all the other classes? will this not mean a re-

* For example, during the Franco-Prussian War, Liebknecht dictated a programme of action *for the whole of democracy*; to an even greater extent Marx and Engels did this in 1848.

treat, or lead to a retreat, from the class point of view? Let us deal with these questions.

We must "go among all classes of the population" as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators, and as organisers. No one doubts that the theoretical work of Social-Democrats should aim at studying all the specific features of the social and political condition of the various classes. But extremely little is done in this direction as compared with the work that is done in studying the specific features of factory life. In the committees and study circles, one can meet people who are immersed in the study even of some special branch of the metal industry; but one can hardly ever find members of organisations (obliged, as often happens, for some reason or other to give up practical work) who are especially engaged in gathering material on some pressing question of social and political life in our country which could serve as a means for conducting Social-Democratic work among other strata of the population. In dwelling upon the fact that the majority of the present-day leaders of the working-class movement lack training, we cannot refrain from mentioning training in this respect also, for it too is bound up with the "Economist" conception of "close organic connection with the proletarian struggle". The principal thing, of course, is *propaganda* and *agitation* among all strata of the people. The work of the West European Social-Democrat is in this respect facilitated by the public meetings and rallies which *all* are free to attend, and by the fact that in parliament he addresses the representatives of *all* classes. We have neither a parliament nor freedom of assembly; nevertheless, we are able to arrange meetings of workers who desire to listen to *a Social-Democrat*. We must also find ways and means of calling meetings of representatives of all social classes that desire to listen to *a democrat*; for he is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice that "the Communists support every revolutionary movement", that we are obliged for that reason to expound and emphasise *general democratic tasks before the whole people*, without for a moment concealing our socialist convictions. He is no Social-Democrat who forgets in practice his obligation to be *ahead of all* in raising, accentuating, and solving every general democratic question.

"But everyone agrees with this!" the impatient reader will exclaim, and the new instructions adopted by the last conference of the Union Abroad for the Editorial Board of *Rabocheye Dyelo* definitely say: "All events of social and political life that affect the proletariat either directly as a special class or as *the vanguard of all the revolutionary forces in the struggle for freedom* should serve as subjects for political propaganda and agitation" (*Two Conferences*, p. 17, our italics). Yes, these are very true and very good words, and we would be fully satisfied if *Rabocheye Dyelo understood* them *and if it refrained from saying in the next breath things that contradict them*. For it is not enough to call ourselves the "vanguard", the advanced contingent; we must act in such a way that *all* the other contingents recognise and are obliged to admit that we are marching in the vanguard. And we ask the reader: Are the representatives of the other "contingents" such fools as to take our word for it when we say that we are the "vanguard"? Just picture to yourselves the following: a Social-Democrat comes to the "contingent" of Russian educated radicals, or liberal constitutionalists, and says, We are the vanguard; "the task confronting us now is, as far as possible, to lend the economic struggle itself a political character". The radical, or constitutionalist, if he is at all intelligent (and there are many intelligent men among Russian radicals and constitutionalists), would only smile at such a speech and would say (to himself, of course, for in the majority of cases he is an experienced diplomat): "Your 'vanguard' must be made up of simpletons. They do not even understand that it is our task, the task of the progressive representatives of bourgeois democracy to lend the workers' economic struggle *itself* a political character. Why, we too, like the West-European bourgeois, want to draw the workers into politics, *but only into trade-unionist*, *not into Social-Democratic politics*. Trade-unionist politics of the working class is precisely *bourgeois politics* of the working class, and this 'vanguard's' formulation of its task is the formulation of trade-unionist politics! Let them call themselves Social-Democrats to their heart's content, I am not a child to get excited over a label. But they must not fall under the influence of those pernicious orthodox doctrinaires, let them allow 'freedom of

criticism' to those who unconsciously are driving Social-Democracy into trade-unionist channels."

And the faint smile of our constitutionalist will turn into Homeric laughter when he learns that the Social-Democrats who talk of Social-Democracy as the vanguard, today, when spontaneity almost completely dominates our movement, fear nothing so much as "belittling the spontaneous element", as "underestimating the significance of the forward movement of the drab everyday struggle, as compared with the propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas", etc., etc.! A "vanguard" which fears that consciousness will outstrip spontaneity, which fears to put forward a bold "plan" that would compel general recognition even among those who differ with us. Are they not confusing "vanguard" with "rearguard"?

Indeed, let us examine the following piece of reasoning by Martynov. On page 40 he says that *Iskra* is one-sided in its tactics of exposing abuses, that "however much we may spread distrust and hatred of the government, we shall not achieve our aim until we have succeeded in developing sufficient active social energy for its overthrow". This, it may be said parenthetically, is the familiar solicitude for the activation of the masses, with a simultaneous striving to restrict one's own activity. But that is not the main point at the moment. Martynov speaks here, accordingly, of *revolutionary* energy ("for overthrowing"). And what conclusion does he arrive at? Since in ordinary times various social strata inevitably march separately, "it is, therefore, clear that we Social-Democrats cannot simultaneously guide the activities of various opposition strata, we cannot dictate to them a positive programme of action, we cannot point out to them in what manner they should wage a day-to-day struggle for their interests.... The liberal strata will themselves take care of the active struggle for their immediate interests, the struggle that will bring them face to face with our political régime" (p. 41). Thus, having begun with talk about revolutionary energy, about the active struggle for the overthrow of the autocracy, Martynov immediately turns toward trade-union energy and active struggle for immediate interests! It goes without saying that we cannot guide the struggle of the students, liberals, etc., for their

"immediate interests"; but this was not the point at issue, most worthy Economist! The point we were discussing was the possible and necessary participation of various social strata in the overthrow of the autocracy; and not only are we *able*, but it is our bounden duty, to guide *these* "activities of the various opposition strata", if we desire to be the "vanguard". Not only will our students and liberals, etc., themselves take care of "the struggle that brings them face to face with our political régime"; the police and the officials of the autocratic government will see to this first and foremost. But if "we" desire to be front-rank democrats, we must make it our concern *to direct* the thoughts of those who are dissatisfied only with conditions at the university, or in the Zemstvo, etc., to the idea that the entire political system is worthless. *We* must take upon ourselves the task of organising an all-round political struggle under the leadership of *our* Party in such a manner as to make it possible for all oppositional strata to render their fullest support to the struggle and to our Party. *We* must train our Social-Democratic practical workers to become political leaders, able to guide all the manifestations of this all-round struggle, able at the right time to "dictate a positive programme of action" for the aroused students, the discontented Zemstvo people, the incensed religious sects, the offended elementary schoolteachers, etc., etc. For that reason, Martynov's assertion that "with regard to these, we can function *merely in the negative* role of exposers of abuses ... we can *only* dissipate their hopes in various government commissions" *is completely false* (our italics). By saying this, Martynov shows that he *absolutely fails to understand* the role that the revolutionary "vanguard" must really play. If the reader bears this in mind, he will be clear as to *the real meaning* of Martynov's concluding remarks: "*Iskra* is the organ of the revolutionary opposition which exposes the state of affairs in our country, particularly the political state of affairs, insofar as it affects the interests of the most varied strata of the population. We, however, work and will continue to work for the cause of the working class in close organic contact with the proletarian struggle. By restricting the sphere of our active influence we deepen that influence" (63). The true sense of this conclusion is as follows: *Iskra* desires *to elevate* the

trade-unionist politics of the working class (to which, through misconception, through lack of training, or through conviction, our practical workers frequently confine themselves) to the level of Social-Democratic politics. *Rabocheye Dyelo*, however, desires *to degrade* Social-Democratic politics to trade-unionist politics. Moreover, it assures the world that the two positions are "entirely compatible within the common cause" (63). *O, sancta simplicitas!*

To proceed. Have we sufficient forces to direct our propaganda and agitation among *all* social classes? Most certainly. Our Economists, who are frequently inclined to deny this, lose sight of the gigantic progress our movement has made from (approximately) 1894 to 1901. Like real "tail-enders" they often go on living in the bygone stages of the movement's inception. In the earlier period, indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to devote ourselves exclusively to activities among the workers and to condemn severely any deviation from this course. The entire task then was to consolidate our position in the working class. At the present time, however, gigantic forces have been attracted to the movement. The best representatives of the younger generation of the educated classes are coming over to us. Everywhere in the provinces there are people, resident there by dint of circumstance, who have taken part in the movement in the past or who desire to do so now and who, are gravitating towards Social-Democracy (whereas in 1894 one could count the Social-Democrats on the fingers of one's hand). A basic political and organisational shortcoming of our movement is our *inability* to utilise all these forces and give them appropriate work (we shall deal with this more fully in the next chapter). The overwhelming majority of these forces entirely lack the opportunity of "going among the workers", so that there are no grounds for fearing that we shall divert forces from our main work. In order to be able to provide the workers with real, comprehensive, and live political knowledge, we must have "our own people", Social-Democrats, everywhere, among all social strata, and in all positions from which we can learn the inner springs of our state mechanism. Such people are required, not only for propaganda and agitation, but in a still larger measure for organisation.

Is there a basis for activity among all classes of the population? Whoever doubts this lags in his consciousness behind the spontaneous awakening of the masses. The working-class movement has aroused and is continuing to arouse discontent in some, hopes of support for the opposition in others, and in still others the realisation that the autocracy is unbearable and must inevitably fall. We would be "politicians" and Social-Democrats in name only (as all too often happens in reality), if we failed to realise that our task is to utilise every manifestation of discontent, and to gather and turn to the best account every protest, however small. This is quite apart from the fact that the millions of the labouring peasantry, handicraftsmen, petty artisans, etc., would always listen eagerly to the speech of any Social-Democrat who is at all qualified. Indeed, is there a single social class in which there are no individuals, groups, or circles that are discontented with the lack of rights and with tyranny and, therefore, accessible to the propaganda of Social-Democrats as the spokesmen of the most pressing general democratic needs? To those who desire to have a clear idea of what the political agitation of a Social-Democrat among *all* classes and strata of the population should be like, we would point to *political exposures* in the broad sense of the word as the principal (but, of course, not the sole) form of this agitation.

"We must arouse in every section of the population that is at all politically conscious a passion for *political* exposure," I wrote in my article "Where To Begin" [*Iskra*, May (No. 4), 1901], with which I shall deal in greater detail later. "We must not be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political exposure is today so feeble, timid, and infrequent. This is not because of a wholesale submission to police despotism, but because those who are able and ready to make exposures have no tribune from which to speak, no eager and encouraging audience, they do not see anywhere among the people that force to which it would be worth while directing their complaint against the 'omnipotent' Russian Government.... We are now in a position to provide a tribune for the nation-wide exposure of the tsarist government, and it is our duty to do this. That tribune must be a Social-Democratic newspaper."*

The ideal audience for political exposure is the working class, which is first and foremost in need of all-round and

* See present volume, pp. 21-22.—*Ed.*

live political knowledge, and is most capable of converting this knowledge into active struggle, even when that struggle does not promise "palpable results". A tribune for *nation-wide* exposures can be only an All-Russian newspaper. "Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in the Europe of today"; in this respect Russia must undoubtedly be included in present-day Europe. The press long ago became a power in our country, otherwise the government would not spend tens of thousands of rubles to bribe it and to subsidise the Katkovs and Meshcherskys. And it is no novelty in autocratic Russia for the underground press to break through the wall of censorship and *compel* the legal and conservative press to speak openly of it. This was the case in the seventies and even in the fifties. How much broader and deeper are now the sections of the people willing to read the illegal underground press, and to learn from it "how to live and how to die", to use the expression of a worker who sent a letter to *Iskra* (No. 7).[172] Political exposures are as much a declaration of war against the *government* as economic exposures are a declaration of war against the factory owners. The moral significance of this declaration of war will be all the greater, the wider and more powerful the campaign of exposure will be and the more numerous and determined the social *class* that has *declared war in order to begin the war*. Hence, political exposures in themselves serve as a powerful instrument for *disintegrating* the system we oppose, as a means for diverting from the enemy his casual or temporary allies, as a means for spreading hostility and distrust among the permanent partners of the autocracy.

In our time only a party that will *organise* really *nation-wide* exposures can become the vanguard of the revolutionary forces. The word "nation-wide" has a very profound meaning. The overwhelming majority of the non-working-class exposers (be it remembered that in order to become the vanguard, we must attract other classes) are sober politicians and level-headed men of affairs. They know perfectly well how dangerous it is to "complain" even against a minor official, let alone against the "omnipotent" Russian Government. And they will come *to us* with their complaints only when they see that these complaints can really have effect, and that

FROM MARX TO MAO NOT FOR COMMERCIAL DISTRIBUTION

we represent *a political force*. In order to become such a force in the eyes of outsiders, much persistent and stubborn work is required *to raise* our own consciousness, initiative, and energy. To accomplish this it is not enough to attach a "vanguard" label to rearguard theory and practice.

But if we have to undertake the organisation of a really nation-wide exposure of the government, in what way will then the class character of our movement be expressed?—the overzealous advocate of "close organic contact with the proletarian struggle" will ask us, as indeed he does. The reply is manifold: we Social-Democrats will organise these nation-wide exposures; all questions raised by the agitation will he explained in a consistently Social-Democratic spirit, without any concessions to deliberate or undeliberate distortions of Marxism; the all-round political agitation will be conducted by a party which unites into one inseparable whole the assault on the government in the name of the entire people, the revolutionary training of the proletariat, and the safeguarding of its political independence, the guidance of the economic struggle of the working class, and the utilisation of all its spontaneous conflicts with its exploiters which rouse and bring into our camp increasing numbers of the proletariat.

But a most characteristic feature of Economism is its failure to understand this connection, more, this identity of the most pressing need of the proletariat (a comprehensive political education through the medium of political agitation and political exposures) with the need of the general democratic movement. This lack of understanding is expressed, not only in "Martynovite" phrases, but in the references to a supposedly class point of view identical in meaning with these phrases. Thus, the authors of the "Economist" letter in *Iskra*, No. 12, state*: "This basic drawback

* Lack of space has prevented us from replying in detail, in *Iskra*, to this letter, which is highly characteristic of the Economists. We were very glad at its appearance, for the allegations that *Iskra* did not maintain a consistent class point of view had reached us long before that from various sources, and we were waiting for an appropriate occasion, or for a formulated expression of this fashionable charge, to give our reply. Moreover, it is our habit to reply to attacks, not by defence, but by counter-attack.

of *Iskra* [overestimation of ideology] is also the cause of its inconsistency on the question of the attitude of Social-Democracy to the various social classes and tendencies. By theoretical reasoning [not by "the growth of Party tasks, which grow together with the Party"], *Iskra* solved the problem of the immediate transition to the struggle against absolutism. In all probability it senses the difficulty of such a task for the workers under the present state of affairs [not only senses, but knows full well that this task appears less difficult to the workers than to the "Economist" intellectuals with their nursemaid concern, for the workers are prepared to fight even for demands which, to use the language of the never-to-be-forgotten Martynov, do not "promise palpable results"] but lacking the patience to wait until the workers will have gathered sufficient forces for this struggle, *Iskra* begins to seek allies in the ranks of the liberals and intellectuals"....

Yes, we have indeed lost all "patience" "waiting" for the blessed time, long promised us by diverse "conciliators", when the Economists will have stopped charging the workers with *their own* backwardness and justifying their own lack of energy with allegations that the workers lack strength. We ask our Economists: What do they mean by "the gathering of working-class strength for the struggle"? Is it not evident that this means the political training of the workers, so that *all* the aspects of our vile autocracy are revealed to them? And is it not clear that *precisely for this work* we need "allies in the ranks of the liberals and intellectuals", who are prepared to join us in the exposure of the political attack on the Zemstvos, on the teachers, on the statisticians, on the students, etc.? Is this surprisingly "intricate mechanism" really so difficult to understand? Has not P. B. Axelrod constantly repeated since 1897 that "the task before the Russian Social-Democrats of acquiring adherents and direct and indirect allies among the non-proletarian classes will be solved principally and primarily by the character of the propagandist activities conducted among the proletariat itself"? But the Martynovs and the other Economists continue to imagine that "by economic struggle against the employers and the government" the workers must *first* gather strength (for trade-unionist politics) and *then*

"go over"—we presume from trade-unionist "training for activity"—to Social-Democratic activity!

"...In this quest," continue the Economists, "*Iskra* not infrequently departs from the class point of view, obscures class antagonisms, and puts into the forefront the common nature of the discontent with the government, although the causes and the degree of the discontent vary considerably among the 'allies'. Such, for example, is *Iskra*'s attitude towards the Zemstvo...." *Iskra*, it is alleged, "promises the nobles that are dissatisfied with the government's sops the assistance of the working class, but it does not say a word about the class antagonism that exists between these social strata." If the reader will turn to the article "The Autocracy and the Zemstvo" (*Iskra*, Nos. 2 and 4), to which, *in all probability*, the authors of the letter refer, he will find that they* deal with the attitude of the *government* towards the "mild agitation of the bureaucratic Zemstvo, which is based on the social-estates", and towards the "independent activity of even the propertied classes". The article states that the workers cannot look on indifferently while the government is waging a struggle against the Zemstvo, and the Zemstvos are called upon to stop making mild speeches and to speak firmly and resolutely when revolutionary Social-Democracy confronts the government in all its strength. What the authors of the letter do not agree with here is not clear. Do they think that the workers will "not understand" the phrases "propertied classes" and "bureaucratic Zemstvo based on the social-estates"? Do they think that *urging* the Zemstvo to abandon mild speeches and to speak firmly is "overestimating ideology"? Do they imagine the workers can "gather strength" for the struggle against the autocracy if they know nothing about the attitude of the autocracy towards the Zemstvo *as well*? All this too remains unknown. One thing alone is clear and that is that the authors of the letter have a very vague idea of what the political tasks of Social-Democracy are. This is revealed still more clearly by their remark: "Such, too, is *Iskra*'s attitude towards the student movement" (i.e., it also "obscures the class antag-

* In the interval *between* these articles there was one (*Iskra*, No. 3), which dealt especially with class antagonisms in the countryside. (See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 420-28.—*Ed.*)

onisms"). Instead of calling on the workers to declare by means of public demonstrations that the real breeding-place of unbridled violence, disorder, and outrage is not the university youth but the Russian Government (*Iskra*, No. 2*), we ought probably to have inserted arguments in the spirit of *Rabochaya Mysl*! Such ideas were expressed by Social-Democrats in the autumn of 1901, after the events of February and March, on the eve of a fresh upsurge of the student movement, which reveals that even in this sphere the "spontaneous" protest against the autocracy is *outstripping* the conscious Social-Democratic leadership of the movement. The spontaneous striving of the workers to defend the students who are being assaulted by the police and the Cossacks surpasses the conscious activity of the Social-Democratic organisation!

"And yet in other articles," continue the authors of the letter, "*Iskra* sharply condemns all compromise and defends, for instance, the intolerant conduct of the Guesdists." We would advise those who are wont so conceitedly and frivolously to declare that the present disagreements among the Social-Democrats are unessential and do not justify a split, to ponder these words. Is it possible for people to work together in the same organisation, when some among them contend that we have done extremely little to explain the hostility of the autocracy to the various classes and to inform the workers of the opposition displayed by the various social strata to the autocracy, while others among them see in this clarification a "compromise"—evidently a compromise with the theory of "economic struggle against the employers and the government"?

We urged the necessity of carrying the class struggle into the rural districts in connection with the fortieth anniversary of the emancipation of the peasantry (issue No. 3** and spoke of the irreconcilability of the local government bodies and the autocracy in relation to Witte's secret Memorandum (No. 4). In connection with the new law we attacked the feudal landlords and the government which serves them (No. 8***) and we welcomed the illegal Zemstvo

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* See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 414-19.—*Ed.*
** See present edition, Vol. 4, pp. 420-28.—*Ed.*
*** See present volume, pp. 95-100.—*Ed.*

congress. We urged the Zemstvo to pass over from abject petitions (No. 8*) to struggle. We encouraged the students, who had begun to understand the need for the political struggle, and to undertake this struggle (No. 3), while, at the same time, we lashed out at the "outrageous incomprehension" revealed by the adherents of the "purely student" movement, who called upon the students to abstain from participating in the street demonstrations (No. 3, in connection with the manifesto issued by the Executive Committee of the Moscow students on February 25). We exposed the "senseless dreams" and the "lying hypocrisy" of the cunning liberals of *Rossiya*[173] (No. 5), while pointing to the violent fury with which the government-gaoler persecuted "peaceful writers, aged professors, scientists, and well-known liberal Zemstvo members" (No. 5, "Police Raid on Literature"). We exposed the real significance of the programme of "state protection for the welfare of the workers" and welcomed the "valuable admission" that "it is better, by granting reforms from above, to forestall the demand for such reforms from below than to wait for those demands to be put forward" (No. 6**). We encouraged the protesting statisticians (No. 7) and censured the strike-breaking statisticians (No. 9). He who sees in these tactics an obscuring of the class-consciousness of the proletariat and *a compromise with liberalism* reveals his utter failure to understand the true significance of the programme of the *Credo* and *carries out that programme de facto*, however much he may repudiate it. For by *such an approach* he drags Social-Democracy towards the "economic struggle against the employers and the government" and *yields to liberalism*, abandons the task of actively intervening in *every* "liberal" issue and of determining *his own*, Social-Democratic, attitude towards this question.

F. ONCE MORE "SLANDERERS", ONCE MORE "MYSTIFIERS"

These polite expressions, as the reader will recall, belong to *Rabocheye Dyelo*, which in this way answers our charge that it "is indirectly preparing the ground for convert-

* See present volume, pp. 101-02.—*Ed.*
** See present volume, pp. 87-88.—*Ed.*

ing the working-class movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy". In its simplicity of heart *Rabocheye Dyelo* decided that this accusation was nothing more than a polemical sally: these malicious doctrinaires are bent on saying all sorts of unpleasant things about us, and, what can be more unpleasant than being an instrument of bourgeois democracy? And so they print in bold type a "refutation": "Nothing but downright slander", "mystification", "mummery" (*Two Conferences*, pp. 30, 31, 33). Like Jove, *Rabocheye Dyelo* (although bearing little resemblance to that deity) is wrathful because it is wrong, and proves by its hasty abuse that it is incapable of understanding its opponents' mode of reasoning. And yet, with only a little reflection it would have understood why *any* subservience to the spontaneity of the mass movement and *any* degrading of Social-Democratic politics to the level of trade-unionist politics mean preparing the ground for converting the working-class movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy. The spontaneous working-class movement is by itself able to create (and inevitably does create) only trade-unionism, and working-class trade-unionist politics is precisely working-class bourgeois politics. The fact that the working class participates in the political struggle, and even in the political revolution, does not in itself make its politics Social-Democratic politics. Will *Rabocheye Dyelo* make bold to deny this? Will it, at long last, publicly, plainly, and without equivocation explain how it understands the urgent questions of international and of Russian Social-Democracy? Hardly. It will never do anything of the kind, because it holds fast to the trick, which might be described as the "not here" method—"It's not me, it's not my horse, I'm not the driver. We are not Economists; *Rabochaya Mysl* does not stand for Economism; there is no Economism at all in Russia." This is a remarkably adroit and "political" trick, which suffers from the slight defect, however, that the publications practising it are usually nicknamed, "At your service, sir".

Rabocheye Dyelo imagines that bourgeois democracy in Russia is, in general, merely a "phantom" (*Two Conferences*, p. 32).* Happy people! Ostrich-like, they bury their heads

* There follows a reference to the "concrete Russian conditions which fatalistically impel the working-class movement on to the revo-

in the sand and imagine that everything around has disappeared. Liberal publicists who month after month proclaim to the world their triumph over the collapse and even the disappearance of Marxism; liberal newspapers (*S. Peterburgskiye Vedomosti*,[174] *Russkiye Vedomosti*, and many others) which encourage the liberals who bring to the workers the Brentano[175] conception of the class struggle and the trade-unionist conception of politics; the galaxy of critics of Marxism, whose real tendencies were so very well disclosed by the *Credo* and whose literary products alone circulate in Russia without let or hindrance; the revival of revolutionary *non*-Social-Democratic tendencies, particularly after the February and March events—all these, apparently, are just phantoms! All these have nothing at all to do with bourgeois democracy!

Rabocheye Dyelo and the authors of the Economist letter published in *Iskra*, No. 12, should "ponder over the reason why the events of the spring brought about such a revival of revolutionary non-Social-Democratic tendencies instead of increasing the authority and the prestige of Social-Democracy".

The reason lies in the fact that we failed to cope with our tasks. The masses of the workers proved to be more active than we. We lacked adequately trained revolutionary leaders and organisers possessed of a thorough knowledge of the mood prevailing among all the opposition strata and able to head the movement, to turn a spontaneous demonstration into a political one, broaden its political character, etc. Under such circumstances, our backwardness will inevitably be utilised by the more mobile and more energetic non-Social-Democratic revolutionaries, and the workers, however energetically and self-sacrificingly they may fight the police and the troops, however revolutionary their actions may be, will prove to be merely a force support-

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lutionary path". But these people refuse to understand that the revolutionary path of the working-class movement might not be a Social-Democratic path. When absolutism reigned, the entire West-European bourgeoisie "impelled", deliberately impelled, the workers on to the path of revolution. We Social-Democrats, however, cannot be satisfied with that. And if we, by any means whatever, degrade Social-Democratic politics to the level of spontaneous trade-unionist politics, we thereby play into the hands of bourgeois democracy.

ing those revolutionaries, the rearguard of bourgeois democracy, and not the Social-Democratic vanguard. Let us take, for example, the German Social-Democrats, whose weak aspects alone our Economists desire to emulate. Why is there *not a single* political event in Germany that does not add to the authority and prestige of Social-Democracy? Because Social-Democracy is always found to be in advance of all others in furnishing the most revolutionary appraisal of every given event and in championing every protest against tyranny. It does not lull itself with arguments that the economic struggle brings the workers to realise that they have no political rights and that the concrete conditions unavoidably impel the working-class movement on to the path of revolution. It intervenes in every sphere and in every question of social and political life; in the matter of Wilhelm's refusal to endorse a bourgeois progressist as city mayor (our Economists have not yet managed to educate the Germans to the understanding that such an act is, in fact, a compromise with liberalism!); in the matter of the law against "obscene" publications and pictures; in the matter of governmental influence on the election of professors, etc., etc. Everywhere the Social-Democrats are found in the forefront, rousing political discontent among all classes, rousing the sluggards, stimulating the laggards, and providing a wealth of material for the development of the political consciousness and the political activity of the proletariat. As a result, even the avowed enemies of socialism are filled with respect for this advanced political fighter, and not infrequently an important document from bourgeois, and even from bureaucratic and Court circles, makes its way by some miraculous means into the editorial office of *Vorwärts*.

This, then, is the resolution of the seeming "contradiction" that surpasses *Rabocheye Dyelo*'s powers of understanding to such an extent that it can only throw up its hands and cry, "Mummery!" Indeed, just think of it: We, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, regard the *mass* working-class movement as the *corner-stone* (and say so in bold type!); we warn all and sundry against belittling the significance of the element of spontaneity; we desire to lend the economic struggle itself—*itself*—a political character; we desire to maintain close and organic contact

with the proletarian struggle. And yet we are told that we are preparing the ground for the conversion of the working-class movement into an instrument of bourgeois democracy! And who are they that presume to say this? People who "compromise" with liberalism by intervening in every "liberal" issue (what a gross misunderstanding of "organic contact with the proletarian struggle"!), by devoting so much attention to the students and even (oh horror!) to the Zemstvos! People who in general wish to devote a greater percentage (compared with the Economists) of their efforts to activity among non-proletarian classes of the population! What is this but "mummery"?

Poor *Rabocheye Dyelo*! Will it ever find the solution to this perplexing puzzle?

IV

THE PRIMITIVENESS OF THE ECONOMISTS AND THE ORGANISATION OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES

Rabocheye Dyelo's assertions, which we have analysed, that the economic struggle is the most widely applicable means of political agitation and that our task now is to lend the economic struggle itself a political character, etc., express a narrow view, not only of our political, but also of our *organisational* tasks. The "economic struggle against the employers and the government" does not at all require an All-Russian centralised organisation, and hence this struggle can never give rise to such an organisation as will combine, in one general assault, all the manifestations of political opposition, protest, and indignation, an organisation that will consist of professional revolutionaries and be led by the real political leaders of the entire people. This stands to reason. The character of any organisation is naturally and inevitably determined by the content of its activity. Consequently, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, by the assertions analysed above, sanctifies and legitimises not only narrowness of political activity, but also of organisational work. In this case, *Rabocheye Dyelo*, as always, proves itself an organ whose consciousness yields to spontaneity. Yet subservience to spontaneously developing forms of organisation,

failure to realise the narrowness and primitiveness of our organisational work, of our "handicraft" methods in this most important sphere, failure to realise this, I say, is a veritable ailment from which our movement suffers. It is not an ailment that comes with decline, but one, of course, that comes with growth. It is however at the present time, when the wave of spontaneous indignation, as it were, is sweeping over us, leaders and organisers of the movement, that an irreconcilable struggle must be waged against all defence of backwardness, against any legitimation of narrowness in this matter. It is particularly necessary to arouse in all who participate in practical work, or are preparing to take up that work, discontent with the *amateurism* prevailing among us and an unshakable determination to rid ourselves of it.

A. WHAT IS PRIMITIVENESS?

We shall try to answer this question by giving a brief description of the activity of a typical Social-Democratic study circle of the period 1894-1901. We have noted that the entire student youth of the period was absorbed in Marxism. Of course, these students were not only, or even not so much, interested in Marxism as a theory; they were interested in it as an answer to the question, "What is to be done?", as a call to take the field against the enemy. These new warriors marched to battle with astonishingly primitive equipment and training. In a vast number of cases they had almost no equipment and absolutely no training. They marched to war like peasants from the plough, armed only with clubs. A students' circle establishes contacts with workers and sets to work, without any connection with the old members of the movement, without any connection with study circles in other districts, or even in other parts of the same city (or in other educational institutions), without any organisation of the various divisions of revolutionary work, without any systematic plan of activity covering any length of time. The circle gradually expands its propaganda and agitation; by its activities it wins the sympathies of fairly large sections of workers and of a certain section of the educated strata, which provide it with money and from among

whom the "committee" recruits new groups of young people. The attractive power of the committee (or League of Struggle) grows, its sphere of activity becomes wider, and the committee expands this activity quite spontaneously; the very people who a year or a few months previously spoke at the students' circle gatherings and discussed the question, "Whither?", who established and maintained contacts with the workers and wrote and published leaflets, now, establish contacts with other groups of revolutionaries, procure literature, set to work to publish a local newspaper, begin to talk of organising a demonstration, and finally turn to open warfare (which may, according to circumstances, take the form of issuing the first agitational leaflet or the first issue of a newspaper, or of organising the first demonstration). Usually the initiation of such actions ends in an immediate and complete fiasco. Immediate and complete, because this open warfare was not the result of a systematic and carefully thought-out and gradually prepared plan for a prolonged and stubborn struggle, but simply the result of the spontaneous growth of traditional study circle work; because, naturally, the police, in almost every case, knew the principal leaders of the local movement, since they had already "gained a reputation" for themselves in their student days, and the police waited only for the right moment to make their raid. They deliberately allowed the study circle sufficient time to develop its work so that they might, obtain a palpable *corpus delicti*, and they always permitted several of the persons known to them to remain at liberty "for breeding" (which, as far as I know, is the technical term used both by our people and by the gendarmes). One cannot help comparing this kind of warfare with that conducted by a mass of peasants, armed with clubs, against modern troops. And one can only wonder at the vitality of the movement which expanded, grew, and scored victories despite the total lack of training on the part of the fighters. True, from the historical point of view, the primitiveness of equipment was not only inevitable at first, but *even legitimate* as one of the conditions for the wide recruiting of fighters, but as soon as serious war operations began (and they began in fact with the strikes in the summer of 1896), the defects in our fighting organisations made themselves felt to an ever-increasing

degree. The government, at first thrown into confusion and committing a number of blunders (e.g., its appeal to the public describing the misdeeds of the socialists, or the banishment of workers from the capitals to provincial industrial centres), very soon adapted itself to the new conditions of the struggle and managed to deploy well its perfectly equipped detachments of *agents provocateurs*, spies, and gendarmes. Raids became so frequent, affected such a vast number of people, and cleared out the local study circles so thoroughly that the masses of the workers lost literally all their leaders, the movement assumed an amazingly sporadic character, and it became utterly impossible to establish continuity and coherence in the work. The terrible dispersion of the local leaders; the fortuitous character of the study circle memberships; the lack of training in, and the narrow outlook on, theoretical, political, and organisational questions were all the inevitable result of the conditions described above. Things have reached such a pass that in several places the workers, because of our lack of self-restraint and the inability to maintain secrecy, begin to lose faith in the intellectuals and to avoid them; the intellectuals, they say, are much too careless and cause police raids!

Anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the movement is aware that all thinking Social-Democrats have at last begun to regard these amateurish methods as a disease. In order that the reader who is not acquainted with the movement may have no grounds for thinking that we are "inventing" a special stage or special disease of the movement, we shall refer once again to the witness we have quoted. We trust we shall be forgiven for the length of the passage:

"While the gradual transition to more extensive practical activity," writes B—v in *Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 6, "a transition that is directly dependent on the general transitional period through which the Russian working-class movement is now passing, is a characteristic feature, ... there is, however, another, no less interesting feature in the general mechanism of the Russian workers' revolution. We refer to *the general lack of revolutionary forces fit for action*,* which is felt not only in St. Petersburg, but throughout Russia. With the general revival of the working-class movement, with the general development of the working masses, with the growing frequency of strikes, with the increasingly open mass struggle of the workers,

* All italics ours.

and with the intensified government persecution, arrests, deportation, and exile, this *lack of highly skilled revolutionary forces is becoming more and more marked* and, without a doubt, *cannot but affect the depth and the general character of the movement*. Many strikes take place without any strong and direct influence upon them by the revolutionary organisations.... A shortage of agitational leaflets and illegal literature is felt.... The workers' study circles are left without agitators.... In addition, there is a constant dearth of funds. In a word, *the growth of the working-class movement is outstripping the growth and development of the revolutionary organisations*. The numerical strength of the active revolutionaries is too small to enable them to concentrate in their own hands the influence exercised upon the whole mass of discontented workers, or to give this discontent even a shadow of coherence and organisation.... The separate study circles, the separate revolutionaries, scattered, uncombined, do not represent a single, strong, and disciplined organisation with proportionately developed parts....” Admitting that the immediate organisation of fresh study circles to replace those that have been broken up “merely proves the vitality of the movement ... but does not prove the existence of an adequate number of adequately prepared revolutionary workers”, the author concludes: “The lack of practical training among the St. Petersburg revolutionaries is seen in the results of their work. The recent trials, especially that of the Self-Emancipation Group and the Labour-against-Capital group,[176] clearly showed that the young agitator, lacking a detailed knowledge of working class conditions and, consequently, of the conditions under which agitation can be carried on in a given factory, ignorant of the principles of secrecy, and understanding only the general principles of Social-Democracy [if he does] is able to carry on his work for perhaps four, five, or six months. Then come arrests, which frequently lead to the break-up of the entire organisation, or at all events, of part of it. The question arises, therefore, can the group conduct successful activity if its existence is measured by months?... Obviously, the defects of the existing organisations cannot be wholly ascribed to the transitional period.... Obviously, the numerical, and above all the qualitative, make-up of the functioning organisations is no small factor, and the first task our Social-Democrats must undertake ... is that of *effectively combining the organisations and making a strict selection of their membership*.”

B. PRIMITIVENESS AND ECONOMISM

We must now deal with a question that has undoubtedly come to the mind of every reader. Can a connection be established between primitiveness as growing pains that affect the *whole* movement, and Economism, which is *one* of the currents in Russian Social-Democracy? We think that it can. Lack of practical training, of ability to carry on organisational work is certainly common *to us all*, includ-

ing those who have from the very outset unswervingly stood for revolutionary Marxism. Of course, were it only lack of practical training, no one could blame the practical workers. But the term "primitiveness" embraces something more than lack of training; it denotes a narrow scope of revolutionary work generally, failure to understand that a good organisation of revolutionaries cannot be built on the basis of such narrow activity, and lastly—and this is the main thing—attempts to justify this narrowness and to elevate it to a special "theory", i.e., subservience to spontaneity on this question too. Once such attempts were revealed, it became clear that primitiveness is connected with Economism and that we shall never rid ourselves of this narrowness of our organisational activity until we rid ourselves of Economism generally (i.e., the narrow conception of Marxist theory, as well as of the role of Social-Democracy and of its political tasks). These attempts manifested themselves in a twofold direction. Some began to say that the working masses themselves have not yet advanced the broad and militant political tasks which the revolutionaries are attempting to "impose" on them; that they must continue to struggle for *immediate* political demands, to conduct "the economic struggle against the employers and the government"* (and, naturally, corresponding to this struggle which is "accessible" to the mass movement there must be an organisation that will be "accessible" to the most untrained youth). Others, far removed from any theory of "gradualness", said that it is possible and necessary to "bring about a political revolution", but that this does not require building a strong organisation of revolutionaries to train the proletariat in steadfast and stubborn struggle. All we need do is to snatch up our old friend, the "accessible" cudgel. To drop metaphor, it means that we must organise a general strike,** or that we must stimulate the "spiritless" progress of the working-class movement by means of "excitative terror"***

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* *Rabochaya Mysl* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*, especially the *Reply* to Plekhanov.

** See "Who Will Bring About the Political Revolution?" in the collection published in Russia, entitled *The Proletarian Struggle*. Re-issued by the Kiev Committee.

*** *Regeneration of Revolutionism* and the journal *Svoboda*.

Both these trends, the opportunists and the "revolutionists", bow to the prevailing amateurism; neither believes that it can be eliminated, neither understands our primary and imperative practical task to establish *an organisation of revolutionaries* capable of lending energy, stability, and continuity to the political struggle.

We have quoted the words of B—v: "The growth of the working-class movement is outstripping the growth and development of the revolutionary organisations." This "valuable remark of a close observer" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*'s comment on B—v's article) has a twofold value for us. It shows that we were right in our opinion that the principal cause of the present crisis in Russian Social-Democracy is *the lag of the leaders* ("ideologists", revolutionaries, Social-Democrats) behind *the spontaneous upsurge of the masses*. It shows that all the arguments advanced by the authors of the Economist letter (in *Iskra*, No. 12), by Krichevsky and by Martynov, as to the danger of belittling the significance of the spontaneous element, of the drab everyday struggle, as to tactics-as-process, etc., are nothing more than a glorification and a defence of primitiveness. These people who cannot pronounce the word "theoretician" without a sneer, who describe their genuflections to common lack of training and backwardness as a "sense for the realities of life", reveal in practice a failure to understand our most imperative *practical* tasks. To laggards they shout: Keep in step! Don't run ahead! To people suffering from a lack of energy and initiative in organisational work, from a lack of "plans" for wide and bold activity, they prate about "tactics-as-process"! The worst sin we commit is that we *degrade* our political *and organisational* tasks to the level of the immediate, "palpable", "concrete" interests of the everyday economic struggle; yet they keep singing to us the same refrain: Lend the economic struggle itself a political character! We repeat: this kind of thing displays as much "sense for the realities of life" as was displayed by the hero in the popular fable who cried out to a passing funeral procession, "Many happy returns of the day!"

Recall the matchless, truly "Nartsis-like" superciliousness with which these wiseacres lectured Plekhanov on the "workers' *circles* generally" (*sic*!) being "unable to cope

with political tasks in the real and *practical* sense of the word, i.e., in the sense of the expedient and successful *practical* struggle for political demands" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*'s *Reply*, p. 24). There are circles and circles, gentlemen! Circles of "amateurs" are not, of course, capable of coping with political tasks so long as they have not become aware of their amateurism and do not abandon it. If, besides this, these amateurs are enamoured of their primitive methods, and insist on writing the word "practical" in italics, and imagine that being practical demands that one's tasks be reduced to the level of understanding of the most backward strata of the masses, then they are hopeless amateurs and, of course, certainly cannot *in general cope with any political tasks*. But a circle of leaders, of the type of Alexeyev and Myshkin, of Khalturin and Zhelyabov, is capable of coping with political tasks in the genuine and most practical sense of the term, for the reason and to the extent that their impassioned propaganda meets with response among the spontaneously awakening masses, and their sparkling energy is answered and supported by the energy of the revolutionary class. Plekhanov was profoundly right, not only in pointing to this revolutionary class and proving that its spontaneous awakening was inevitable, but in setting even the "workers' circles" a great and lofty political task. But you refer to the mass movement that has sprung up since that time in order *to degrade* this task, *to curtail* the energy and scope of activity of the "workers' circles". If you are not amateurs enamoured of your primitive methods, what are you then? You boast that you are practical, but you fail to see what every Russian practical worker knows, namely, the miracles that the energy, not only of a circle, but even of an individual person is able to perform in the revolutionary cause. Or do you think that our movement cannot produce leaders like those of the seventies? If so, why do you think so? Because we lack training? But we are training ourselves, we will go on training ourselves, and we will be trained! Unfortunately it is true that the surface of the stagnant waters of the "economic struggle against the employers and the government" is overgrown with fungus; people have appeared among us who kneel in prayer to spontaneity, gazing with awe (to take an expression from

Plekhanov) upon the "posterior" of the Russian proletariat. But we will get rid of this fungus. The time has come when Russian revolutionaries, guided by a genuinely revolutionary theory, relying upon the genuinely revolutionary and spontaneously awakening class, can at last—at long last!—rise to full stature in all their giant strength. All that is required is for the masses of our practical workers, and the still larger masses of those who dreamed of practical work when they were still at school, to pour scorn and ridicule upon any suggestion that may be made to degrade our political tasks and to restrict the scope of our organisational work. And we will achieve that, rest assured, gentlemen!

In the article "Where To Begin", I wrote in opposition to *Rabocheye Dyelo*: "The tactics of agitation in relation to some special question, or the tactics with regard to some detail of party organisation may be changed in twenty-four hours; but only people devoid of all principle are capable of changing, in twenty-four hours, or, for that matter, in twenty-four months, their view on the necessity—in general, constantly, and absolutely—of an organisation of struggle and of political agitation among the masses."* To this *Rabocheye Dyelo* replied: "This, the only one of *Iskra*'s charges that makes a pretence of being based on facts, is totally without foundation. Readers of *Rabocheye Dyelo* know very well that from the outset we not only called for political agitation, without waiting for the appearance of *Iskra* ... [saying at the same time that not only the workers' study circles, "but also the mass working-class movement could not regard as its first political task the overthrow of absolutism", but only the struggle for immediate political demands, and that "the masses begin to understand immediate political demands after one, or at all events, after several strikes"],... but that with our publications which we furnished from abroad for the comrades working in Russia, we provided the *only* Social-Democratic political and agitational material ... [and in this sole material you not only based the widest political agitation exclusively on the economic struggle, but you even went to the extent of claiming that this restricted agitation was the "most widely

* See present volume, p. 18.—*Ed.*

applicable". And do you not observe, gentlemen, that your own argument—that this was the *only* material provided—proves the necessity for *Iskra*'s appearance, and its struggle against *Rabocheye Dyelo*?]. ... On the other hand, our publishing activity actually prepared the ground for the tactical unity of the Party ... [unity in the conviction that tactics is a process of growth of Party tasks that grow together with the Party? A precious unity indeed!] ... and by that rendered possible the creation of a 'militant organisation' for which the Union Abroad did all that an organisation abroad could do" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 10, p. 15). A vain attempt at evasion! I would never dream of denying that you did all you possibly could. I have asserted and assert now that the *limits* of what is "possible" for you to do are restricted by the narrowness of your outlook. It is ridiculous to talk of a "militant organisation" to fight for "immediate political demands", or to conduct the economic struggle against the employers and the government".

But if the reader wishes to see the pearls of "Economist" infatuation with amateurism, he must, of course, turn from the eclectic and vacillating *Rabocheye Dyelo* to the consistent and determined *Rabochaya Mysl*. In its *Separate Supplement*, p. 13, R. M. wrote: "Now two words about the so-called revolutionary intelligentsia proper. True, on more than one occasion it has proved itself prepared 'to enter into determined battle with tsarism'. The unfortunate thing, however, is that our revolutionary intelligentsia, ruthlessly persecuted by the political police, imagined the struggle against the political police to be the political struggle against the autocracy. That is why, to this day, it cannot understand 'where the forces for the struggle against the autocracy are to be obtained'."

Truly matchless is the lofty contempt for the struggle against the police displayed by this worshipper (in the worst sense of the word) of the *spontaneous* movement! He is prepared *to justify* our inability to organise secret activity by the argument that with the spontaneous mass movement it is not at all important for us to struggle against the political police! Very few people indeed would subscribe to this appalling conclusion; to such an extent have our deficiencies in revolutionary organisations become a matter of acute

importance. But if Martynov, for example, refuses to subscribe to this, it will only be because he is unable, or lacks the courage, to think out his ideas to their logical conclusion. Indeed, does the "task" of advancing concrete demands by the masses, demands that promise palpable results, call for special efforts to create a stable, centralised, militant organisation of revolutionaries? Cannot such a "task" be carried out even by masses that do not "struggle against the political police" at all? Could this task, moreover, be fulfilled if, in addition to the few leaders, it were not undertaken by such workers (the overwhelming majority) as are quite *incapable* of "struggling against the political police"? Such workers, average people of the masses, are capable of displaying enormous energy and self-sacrifice in strikes and in street battles with the police and the troops, and are capable (in fact, are alone capable) of *determining* the outcome of our entire movement—but the struggle against the *political* police requires special qualities; it requires *professional* revolutionaries. And we must see to it, not only that the masses "advance" concrete demands, but that the masses of the workers "advance" an increasing number of such professional revolutionaries. Thus, we have reached the question of the relation between an organisation of professional revolutionaries and the labour movement pure and simple. Although this question has found little reflection in literature, it has greatly engaged us "politicians" in conversations and polemics with comrades who gravitate more or less towards Economism. It is a question meriting special treatment. But before taking it up, let us offer one further quotation by way of illustrating our thesis on the connection between primitiveness and Economism.

In his *Reply*, Mr. N. N.[177] wrote: "The Emancipation of Labour group demands direct struggle against the government without first considering where the material forces for this struggle are to be obtained, and without indicating *the path of the struggle*." Emphasising the last words, the author adds the following footnote to the word "path": "This cannot be explained by purposes of secrecy, because the programme does not refer to a plot but to *a mass movement*. And the masses cannot proceed by secret paths. Can we conceive of a secret strike? Can we conceive of secret

demonstrations and petitions?" (*Vademecum*, p. 59.) Thus, the author comes quite close to the question of the "material forces" (organisers of strikes and demonstrations) and to the "paths" of the struggle, but, nevertheless, is still in a state of consternation, because he "worships" the mass movement, i.e., he regards it as something that *relieves* us of the necessity of conducting revolutionary activity and not as something that should encourage us and stimulate our revolutionary activity. It is impossible for a strike to remain a secret to those participating in it and to those immediately associated with it, but it may (and in the majority of cases does) remain a "secret" to the masses of the Russian workers, because the government takes care to cut all communication with the strikers, to prevent all news of strikes from spreading. Here indeed is where a special "struggle against the political police" is required, a struggle that can never be conducted actively by such large masses as take part in strikes. This struggle must be organised, according to "all the rules of the art", by people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity. The fact that the masses are spontaneously being drawn into the movement does not make the organisation of this struggle *less necessary*. On the contrary, it makes it *more necessary*; for we socialists would be failing in our direct duty to the masses if we did not prevent the police from making a secret of every strike and every demonstration (and if we did not ourselves from time to time secretly prepare strikes and demonstrations). And we *will succeed in doing this*, because the spontaneously awakening masses will *also produce* increasing, numbers of "professional revolutionaries" *from their own ranks* (that is, if we do not take it into our heads to advise the workers to keep on marking time).

C. ORGANISATION OF WORKERS AND ORGANISATION OF REVOLUTIONARIES

It is only natural to expect that for a Social-Democrat whose conception of the political struggle coincides with the conception of the "economic struggle against the employers and the government", the "organisation of revolutionaries" will more or less coincide with the "organisation of

workers". This, in fact, is what actually happens; so that when we speak of organisation, we literally speak in different tongues. I vividly recall, for example, a conversation I once had with a fairly consistent Economist, with whom I had not been previously acquainted. We were discussing the pamphlet, *Who Will Bring About the Political Revolution?* and were soon of a mind that its principal defect was its ignoring of the question of organisation. We had begun to assume full agreement between us; but, as the conversation proceeded, it became evident that we were talking of different things. My interlocutor accused the author of ignoring strike funds, mutual benefit societies, etc., whereas I had in mind an organisation of revolutionaries as an essential factor in "bringing about" the political revolution. As soon as the disagreement became clear, there was hardly, as I remember, a single question of principle upon which I was in agreement with the Economist!

What was the source of our disagreement? It was the fact that on questions both of organisation and of politics the Economists are forever lapsing from Social-Democracy into trade-unionism. The political struggle of Social-Democracy is far more extensive and complex than the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government. Similarly (indeed for that reason), the organisation of the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party must inevitably be of *a kind different* from the organisation of the workers designed for this struggle. The workers' organisation must in the first place be a trade-union organisation; secondly, it must be as broad as possible; and thirdly, it must be as public as conditions will allow (here, and further on, of course, I refer only to absolutist Russia). On the other hand, the organisation of the revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people who make revolutionary activity their profession (for which reason I speak of the organisation of *revolutionaries*, meaning revolutionary Social-Democrats). In view of this common characteristic of the members of such an organisation, *all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals*, not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession, in both categories, *must be effaced*. Such an organisation must perforce not be very extensive

and must be as secret as possible. Let us examine this threefold distinction.

In countries where political liberty exists the distinction between a trade-union and a political organisation is clear enough, as is the distinction between trade unions and Social-Democracy. The relations between the latter and the former will naturally vary in each country according to historical, legal, and other conditions; they may be more or less close, complex, etc. (in our opinion they should be as close and as little complicated as possible); but there can be no question in free countries of the organisation of trade unions coinciding with the organisation of the Social-Democratic Party. In Russia, however, the yoke of the autocracy appears at first glance to obliterate all distinctions between the Social-Democratic organisation and the workers' associations, since *all* workers' associations and *all* study circles are prohibited, and since the principal manifestation and weapon of the workers' economic struggle—the strike—is regarded as a criminal (and sometimes even as a political!) offence. Conditions in our country, therefore, on the one hand, strongly "impel" the workers engaged in economic struggle to concern themselves with political questions, and, on the other, they "impel" Social-Democrats to confound trade-unionism with Social-Democracy (and our Krichevskys, Martynovs, and Co., while diligently discussing the first kind of "impulsion", fail to notice the second). Indeed, picture to yourselves people who are immersed ninety-nine per cent in "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". Some of them will never, during the *entire* course of their activity (from four to six months), be impelled to think of the need for a more complex organisation of revolutionaries. Others, perhaps, will come across the fairly widely distributed Bernsteinian literature, from which they will become convinced of the profound importance of the forward movement of "the drab everyday struggle". Still others will be carried away, perhaps, by the seductive idea of showing the world a new example of "close and organic contact with the proletarian struggle"—contact between the trade-union and the Social-Democratic movements. Such people may argue that the later a country enters the arena of capitalism and, consequently, of the

working-class movement, the more the socialists in that country may take part in, and support, the trade-union movement, and the less the reason for the existence of non-Social-Democratic trade unions. So far the argument is fully correct; unfortunately, however, some go beyond that and dream of a complete fusion of Social-Democracy with trade-unionism. We shall soon see, from the example of the Rules of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, what a harmful effect such dreams have upon our plans of organisation.

The workers' organisations for the economic struggle should be trade-union organisations. Every Social-Democratic worker should as far as possible assist and actively work in these organisations. But, while this is true, it is certainly not in our interest to demand that only Social-Democrats should be eligible for membership in the "trade" unions, since that would only narrow the scope of our influence upon the masses. Let every worker who understands the need to unite for the struggle against the employers and the government join the trade unions. The very aim of the trade unions would be impossible of achievement, if they did not unite all who have attained at least this elementary degree of understanding, if they were not very *broad* organisations. The broader these organisations, the broader will be our influence over them—an influence due, not only to the "spontaneous" development of the economic struggle, but to the direct and conscious effort of the socialist trade-union members to influence their comrades. But a broad organisation cannot apply methods of strict secrecy (since this demands far greater training than is required for the economic struggle). How is the contradiction between the need for a large membership and the need for strictly secret methods to be reconciled? How are we to make the trade unions as public as possible? Generally speaking, there can be only two ways to this end: either the trade unions become legalised (in some countries this preceded the legalisation of the socialist and political unions), or the organisation is kept secret, but so "free" and amorphous, *lose** as the Germans say, that the need for secret methods becomes almost negligible as far as the bulk of the members is concerned.

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* *Lose* (German)—"loose".—*Ed.*

The legalisation of non-socialist and non-political labour unions in Russia has begun, and there is no doubt that every advance made by our rapidly growing Social-Democratic working-class movement will multiply and encourage attempts at legalisation—attempts proceeding for the most part from supporters of the existing order, but partly also from the workers themselves and from liberal intellectuals. The banner of legality has already been hoisted by the Vasilyevs and the Zubatovs. Support has been promised and rendered by the Ozerovs and the Wormses,[178] and followers of the new tendency are now to be found among the workers. Henceforth, we cannot but reckon with this tendency. How we are to reckon with it, on this there can be no two opinions among Social-Democrats. We must steadfastly expose any part played in this movement by the Zubatovs and the Vasilyeys, the gendarmes and the priests, and explain their real intentions to the workers. We must also expose all the conciliatory, "harmonious" notes that will be heard in the speeches of liberal politicians at legal meetings of the workers, irrespective of whether the speeches are motivated by an earnest conviction of the desirability of peaceful class collaboration, by a desire to curry favour with the powers that be, or whether they are simply the result of clumsiness. Lastly, we must warn the workers against the traps often set by the police, who at such open meetings and permitted societies spy out the "fiery ones" and try to make use of legal organisations to plant their *agents provocateurs* in the illegal organisations.

Doing all this does not at all mean forgetting that *in the long run* the legalisation of the working-class movement will be to our advantage, and not to that of the Zubatovs. On the contrary, it is precisely our campaign of exposure that will help us to separate the tares from the wheat. What the tares are, we have already indicated. By the wheat we mean attracting the attention of ever larger numbers, including the most backward sections, of the workers to social and political questions, and freeing ourselves, the revolutionaries, from functions that are essentially legal (the distribution of legal books, mutual aid, etc.), the development of which will inevitably provide us with an increasing quantity of material for agitation. In this sense, we may, and should,

say to the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs: Keep at it, gentlemen, do your best! Whenever you place a trap in the path of the workers (either by way of direct provocation, or by the "honest" demoralisation of the workers with the aid of "Struve-ism") we will see to it that you are exposed. But whenever you take a real step forward, though it be the most "timid zigzag", we will say: Please continue! And the only step that can be a real step forward is a real, if small, extension of the workers' field of action. Every such extension will be to our advantage and will help to hasten the advent of legal societies of the kind in which it will not be *agents provocateurs* who are detecting socialists, but socialists who are gaining adherents. In a word, our task is to fight the tares. It is not our business to grow wheat in flower-pots. By pulling up the tares, we clear the soil for the wheat. And while the Afanasy Ivanoviches and Pulkheria Ivanovnas[179] are tending their flower-pot crops, we must prepare the reapers, not only to cut down the tares of today, but to reap the wheat of tomorrow.*

Thus, *we* cannot by means of legalisation *solve* the problem of creating a trade-union organisation that will be as little secret and as extensive as possible (but we should be extremely glad if the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs disclosed to us even a partial opportunity for such a solution—to this end, however, we must strenuously combat them). There remain secret trade-union organisations, and *we must* give all possible assistance to the workers who (as we definitely know) are adopting this course. Trade-union organisations, not only can be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle, but can also become

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* *Iskra*'s campaign against the tares evoked the following angry outburst from *Rabocheye Dyelo*: "For *Iskra*, the signs of the times lie not so much in great events [of the spring], as in the miserable attempts of the agents of Zubatov to 'legalise' the working-class movement. It fails to see that these facts tell against it; for they testify that the working-class movement has assumed menacing proportions in the eyes of the government" (*Two Conferences*, p. 27). For all this we have to blame the "dogmatism" of the orthodox who "turn a deaf ear to the imperative demands of life". They obstinately refuse to see the yard-high wheat and are combating inch-high tares! Does this not reveal a "distorted sense of perspective in regard to the Russian working-class movement" (ibid., p. 27)?

a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organisation. In order to achieve this purpose, and in order to guide the nascent trade-union movement in the channels desired by Social-Democracy, we must first understand clearly the absurdity of the plan of organisation the St. Petersburg Economists have been nursing for nearly five years. That plan is set forth in the "Rules for a Workers' Mutual Benefit Fund" of July 1897 ("*Listok*" *Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 46, taken from *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1), as well as in the "Rules for a Trade-Union Workers' Organisation" of October 1900 (special leaflet printed in St. Petersburg and referred to in *Iskra*, No. 1). Both these sets of rules have one main shortcoming: they set up the broad workers' organisation in a rigidly specified structure and confound it with the organisation of revolutionaries. Let us take the last-mentioned set of rules, since it is drawn up in greater detail. The body consists of *fifty-two* paragraphs. Twenty-three deal with the structure, the method of functioning, and the competence of the "workers' circles", which are to be organised in every factory ("a maximum of ten persons") and which elect "central (factory) groups". "The central group," says paragraph 2, "observes all that goes on in its factory or workshop and keeps a record of events." "The central group presents to subscribers a monthly financial account" (par. 17), etc. Ten paragraphs are devoted to the "district organisation", and nineteen to the highly complex interconnection between the Committee of the Workers' Organisation and the Committee of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle (elected representatives of each district and of the "executive groups"—"groups of propagandists, groups for maintaining contact with the provinces, and with the organisation abroad, groups for managing stores, publications, and funds").

Social-Democracy = "executive groups" in relation to the economic struggle of the workers! It would be difficult to show more glaringly how the Economists' ideas deviate from Social-Democracy to trade-unionism, and how alien to them is any idea that a Social-Democrat must concern himself first and foremost with an organisation of revolutionaries capable of guiding the *entire* proletarian struggle for emancipation. To talk of "the political emancipation of the

working class" and of the struggle against "tsarist despotism", and at the same time to draft rules like these, means to have no idea whatsoever of the real political tasks of Social-Democracy. Not one of the fifty or so paragraphs reveals even a glimmer of understanding that it is necessary to conduct the widest possible political agitation among the masses, an agitation highlighting every aspect of Russian absolutism and the specific features of the various social classes in Russia. Rules like these are of no use even for the achievement of trade-union, let alone political, aims, since trade unions are organised by *trades*, of which no mention is made.

But most characteristic, perhaps, is the amazing top-heaviness of the whole "system", which attempts to bind each single factory and its "committee" by a permanent string of uniform and ludicrously petty rules and a three-stage system of election. Hemmed in by the narrow outlook of Economism, the mind is lost in details that positively reek of red tape and bureaucracy. In practice, of course, three-fourths of the clauses are never applied; on the other hand, a "secret" organisation of this kind, with its central group in each factory, makes it very easy for the gendarmes to carry out raids on a vast scale. The Polish comrades have passed through a similar phase in their movement, with everybody enthusiastic about the extensive organisation of workers' benefit funds; but they very quickly abandoned this idea when they saw that such organisations only provided rich harvests for the gendarmes. If we have in mind broad workers' organisations, and not widespread arrests, if we do not want to provide satisfaction to the gendarmes, we must see to it that these organisations remain without any rigid formal structure. But will they be able to function in that case?

Let us see what the functions are: "... To observe all that goes on in the factory and keep a record of events" (par. 2 of the Rules). Do we really require a formally established group for this purpose? Could not the purpose be better served by correspondence conducted in the illegal papers without the setting up of special groups? "... To lead the struggles of the workers for the improvement of their workshop conditions" (par. 3). This, too, requires no set organisational

form. Any sensible agitator can in the course of ordinary conversation gather what the demands of the workers are and transmit them to a narrow—not a broad—organisation of revolutionaries for expression in a leaflet. "...To organise a fund ... to which subscriptions of two kopeks per ruble* should be made" (par. 9)—and then to present to subscribers a monthly financial account (par. 17), to expel members who fail to pay their contributions (par. 10), and so forth. Why, this is a very paradise for the police; for nothing would be easier for them than to penetrate into such a secrecy of a "central factory fund", confiscate the money, and arrest the best people. Would it not be simpler to issue one-kopek or two-kopek coupons bearing the official stamp of a well-known (very narrow and very secret) organisation, or to make collections without coupons of any kind and to print reports in a certain agreed code in an illegal paper? The object would thereby be attained, but it would be a hundred times more difficult for the gendarmes to pick up clues.

I could go on analysing the Rules, but I think that what has been said will suffice. A small, compact core of the most reliable, experienced, and hardened workers, with responsible representatives in the principal districts and connected by all the rules of strict secrecy with the organisation of revolutionaries, can, with the widest support of the masses and without any formal organisation, perform *all* the functions of a trade-union organisation, in a manner, moreover, desirable to Social-Democracy. Only in this way can we secure the *consolidation* and development of a *Social-Democratic* trade-union movement, despite all the gendarmes.

It may be objected that an organisation which is so *lose* that it is not even definitely formed, and which has not even an enrolled and registered membership, cannot be called an organisation at all. Perhaps so. Not the name is important. What is important is that this "organisation without members" shall do everything that is required, and from the very outset ensure a solid connection between our future trade unions and socialism. Only an incorrigible utopian would have a *broad* organisation of workers, with elections, reports, universal suffrage, etc., under the autocracy.

* Of wages earned.—*Tr.*

The moral to be drawn from this is simple. If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organisation of revolutionaries, we can ensure the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims both of Social-Democracy and of trade unions proper. If, however, we begin with a broad workers' organisation, which is supposedly most "accessible" to the masses (but which is actually most accessible to the gendarmes and makes revolutionaries most accessible to the police), we shall achieve neither the one aim nor the other; we shall not eliminate our rule-of-thumb methods, and, because we remain scattered and our forces are constantly broken up by the police, we shall only make trade unions of the Zubatov and Ozerov type the more accessible to the masses.

What, properly speaking, should be the functions of the organisation of revolutionaries? We shall deal with this question in detail. First, however, let us examine a very typical argument advanced by our terrorist, who (sad fate!) in this matter also is a next-door neighbour to the Economist. *Svoboda*, a journal published for workers, contains in its first issue an article entitled "Organisation", the author of which tries to defend his friends, the Economist workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He writes:

"It is bad when the masses are mute and unenlightened, when the movement does not come from the rank and file. For instance, the students of a university town leave for their homes during the summer and other holidays, and immediately the workers' movement comes to a standstill. Can a workers' movement which has to be pushed on from outside be a real force? No, indeed.... It has not yet learned to walk, it is still in leading-strings. So it is in all matters. The students go off, and everything comes to a standstill. The most capable are seized; the cream is skimmed and the milk turns sour. If the 'committee' is arrested, everything comes to a standstill until a new one can be formed. And one never knows what sort of committee will be set up next—it may be nothing like the former. The first said one thing, the second may say the very opposite. Continuity between yesterday and tomorrow is broken, the experience of the past does not serve as a guide for the future. And all because no roots have been struck in depth, in the masses; the work is carried on not by a hundred fools, but by a dozen wise men. A dozen wise men can be wiped out at a snap, but when the organisation embraces masses, everything proceeds from them, and nobody, however he tries, can wreck the cause" (p. 63).

The facts are described correctly. The picture of our amateurism is well drawn. But the conclusions are worthy

of *Rabochaya Mysl*, both as regards their stupidity and their lack of political tact. They represent the height of stupidity, because the author confuses the philosophical and social-historical question of the "depth" of the "roots" of the movement with the technical and organisational question of the best method in combating the gendarmes. They represent the height of political tactlessness, because, instead of appealing from bad leaders to good leaders, the author appeals from the leaders in general to the "masses" . This is as much an attempt to drag us back organisationally as the idea of substituting excitative terrorism for political agitation drags us back politically. Indeed, I am experiencing a veritable *embarras de richesses*, and hardly know where to begin to disentangle the jumble offered up by *Svoboda*. For clarity, let me begin by citing an example. Take the Germans. It will not be denied, I hope, that theirs is a mass organisation, that in Germany everything proceeds from the masses, that the working-class movement there has learned to walk. Yet observe how these millions value their "dozen" tried political leaders, how firmly they cling to them. Members of the hostile parties in parliament have often taunted the socialists by exclaiming: "Fine democrats you are indeed! Yours is a working-class movement only in name; in actual fact the same clique of leaders is always in evidence, the same Bebel and the same Liebknecht, year in and year out, and that goes on for decades. Your supposedly elected workers' deputies are more permanent than the officials appointed by the Emperor!" But the Germans only smile with contempt at these demagogic attempts to set the "masses" against the "leaders", to arouse bad and ambitious instincts in the former, and to rob the movement of its solidity and stability by undermining the confidence of the masses in their "dozen wise men". Political thinking is sufficiently developed among the Germans, and they have accumulated sufficient political experience to understand that without the "dozen" tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience, and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle. The Germans too have had demagogues in their ranks who have flattered the "hundred fools", exalted them above the "dozen

wise men", extolled the "horny hand" of the masses, and (like Most and Hasselmann) have spurred them on to reckless "revolutionary" action and sown distrust towards the firm and steadfast leaders. It was only by stubbornly and relentlessly combating all demagogic elements within the socialist movement that German socialism has managed to grow and become as strong as it is. Our wiseacres, however, at a time when Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a crisis entirely due to the lack of sufficiently trained, developed, and experienced leaders to guide the spontaneously awakening masses, cry out with the profundity of fools: "It is a bad business when the movement does not proceed from the rank and file."

"A committee of students is of no use; it is not stable." Quite true. But the conclusion to be drawn from this is that we must have a committee of professional *revolutionaries*, and it is immaterial whether a student or a worker is capable of becoming a professional revolutionary. The conclusion you draw, however, is that the working-class movement must not be pushed on from outside! In your political innocence you fail to notice that you are playing into the hands of our Economists and fostering our amateurism. Wherein, may I ask, did our students "push on" our workers? *In the sense* that the student brought to the worker the fragments of political knowledge he himself possesses, the crumbs of socialist ideas he has managed to acquire (for the principal intellectual diet of the present-day student, legal Marxism, could furnish only the rudiments, only scraps of knowledge). There has never been too much of *such* "pushing on from outside"; on the contrary, there has so far been all too little of it in our movement, for we have been stewing too assiduously in our own juice; we have bowed far too slavishly to the elementary "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government". We professional revolutionaries must and will make it our business to engage in *this kind* of "pushing on" a hundred times more forcibly than we have done hitherto. But the very fact that you select so hideous a phrase as "pushing on from outside"—a phrase which cannot but rouse in the workers (at least in the workers who are as unenlightened as you yourselves) a sense of distrust towards *all* who bring

them political knowledge and revolutionary experience from outside, which cannot but rouse in them an instinctive desire to resist *all* such people—proves you to be *demagogues*, and demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class.

And, please—don't hasten howling about my "uncomradely methods" of debating. I have not the least desire to doubt the purity of your intentions. As I have said, one may become a demagogue out of sheer political innocence. But I have shown that you have descended to demagogy, and I will never tire of repeating that demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class. The worst enemies, because they arouse base instincts in the masses, because the unenlightened worker is unable to recognise his enemies in men who represent themselves, and sometimes sincerely so, as his friends. The worst enemies, because in the period of disunity and vacillation, when our movement is just beginning to take shape, nothing is easier than to employ demagogic methods to mislead the masses, who can realise their error only later by bitter experience. That is why the slogan of the day for the Russian Social-Democrat must be—resolute struggle against *Svoboda* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*, both of which have sunk to the level of demagogy. We shall deal with this further in greater detail.*

"A dozen wise men can be more easily wiped out than a hundred fools." This wonderful truth (for which the hundred fools will always applaud you) appears obvious only because in the very midst of the argument you have skipped from one question to another. You began by talking and continued to talk of the unearthing of a "committee", of the unearthing of an "organisation", and now you skip to the question of unearthing the movement's "roots" in their "depths". The fact is, of course, that our movement cannot be unearthed, for the very reason that it has countless thousands of roots deep down among the masses; but that is not the point at issue. As far as "deep roots" are concerned,

* For the moment let us observe merely that our remarks on "pushing on from outside" and *Svoboda*'s other disquisitions on organisation apply *in their entirety* to *all* the Economists, including the adherents of *Rabocheye Dyelo*; for some of them have actively preached and defended such views on organisation, while others among them have drifted into them.

we cannot be "unearthed" even now, despite all our amateurism, and yet we all complain, and cannot but complain, that the "*organisations*" are being unearthed and as a result it is impossible to maintain continuity in the movement. But since you raise the question of *organisations* being unearthed and persist in your opinion, I assert that it is far more difficult to unearth a dozen wise men than a hundred fools. This position I will defend, no matter how much you instigate the masses against me for my "anti-democratic" views, etc. As I have stated repeatedly, by "wise men", in connection with organisation, I mean *professional revolutionaries*, irrespective of whether they have developed from among students or working men. I assert: (1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organisation of leaders maintaining continuity; (2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously into the struggle, which forms the basis of the movement and participates in it, the more urgent the need for such an organisation, and the more solid this organisation must be (for it is much easier for all sorts of demagogues to side-track the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that such an organisation must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; (4) that in an autocratic state, the more we *confine* the membership of such an organisation to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to unearth the organisation; and (5) the *greater* will be the number of people from the working class and from the other social classes who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it.

I invite our Economists, terrorists, and "Economists-terrorists"* to confute these propositions. At the moment,

* This term is perhaps more applicable to *Svoboda* than the former, for in an article entitled "The Regeneration of Revolutionism" the publication defends terrorism, while in the article at present under review it defends Economism. One might say of *Svoboda* that "it would if it could, but it can't". Its wishes and intentions are of the very best—but the result is utter confusion; this is chiefly due to the fact that, while *Svoboda* advocates continuity of organisation, it refuses to recognise continuity of revolutionary thought and Social-Democratic theory. It wants to revive the professional revolutionary ("The

I shall deal only with the last two points. The question as to whether it is easier to wipe out "a dozen wise men" or "a hundred fools" reduces itself to the question, above considered, whether it is possible to have a mass *organisation* when the maintenance of strict secrecy is essential. We can never give a mass organisation that degree of secrecy without which there can be no question of persistent and continuous struggle against the government. To concentrate all secret functions in the hands of as small a number of professional revolutionaries as possible does not mean that the latter will "do the thinking for all" and that the rank and file will not take an active part in the *movement*. On the contrary, the membership will promote increasing numbers of the professional revolutionaries from its ranks; for it will know that it is not enough for a few students and for a few working men waging the economic struggle to gather in order to form a "committee", but that it takes years to train oneself to be a professional revolutionary; and the rank and file will "think", not only of amateurish methods, but of such training. Centralisation of the secret functions of the *organisation* by no means implies centralisation of all the functions of the *movement*. Active participation of the widest masses in the illegal press will not diminish because a "dozen" professional revolutionaries centralise the secret functions connected with this work; on the contrary, it will *increase* tenfold. In this way, and in this way alone, shall we ensure that reading the illegal press, writing for it, and to some extent even distributing it, will *almost cease to be secret work*, for the police will soon come to realise the folly and impossibility of judicial and administrative red-tape procedure over every copy of a publication that is being distributed in the thousands. This holds not only for the press, but for every function of the movement, even for demonstrations. The active and widespread participation of the masses will not suffer; on the contrary, it will benefit by the fact that a "dozen" experienced revolution-

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Regeneration of Revolutionism"), and to that end proposes, first, excitative terrorism, and, secondly, "an organisation of average workers" (*Svoboda*, No. 1, p. 66, et seq.), as less likely to be "pushed on from outside". In other words, it proposes to pull the house down to use the timber for heating it.

aries, trained professionally no less than the police, will centralise all the secret aspects of the work—the drawing up of leaflets, the working out of approximate plans; and the appointing of bodies of leaders for each urban district, for each factory district, and for each educational institution, etc. (I know that exception will be taken to my "undemocratic" views, but I shall reply below fully to this anything but intelligent objection.) Centralisation of the most secret functions in an organisation of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and enhance the quality of the activity of a large number of other organisations, that are intended for a broad public and are therefore as loose and as non-secret as possible, such as workers' trade unions; workers' self-education circles and circles for reading illegal literature; and socialist, as well as democratic, circles among *all* other sections of the population; etc., etc. We must have such circles, trade unions, and organisations everywhere in *as large a number as possible* and with the widest variety of functions; but it would be absurd and harmful *to confound* them with the organisation of *revolutionaries*, to efface the border-line between them, to make still more hazy the all too faint recognition of the fact that in order to "serve" the mass movement we must have people who will devote themselves exclusively to Social-Democratic activities, and that such people must *train* themselves patiently and steadfastly to be professional revolutionaries.

Yes, this recognition is incredibly dim. Our worst sin with regard to organisation consists in the fact that *by our primitiveness we have lowered the prestige of revolutionaries in Russia*. A person who is flabby and shaky on questions of theory, who has a narrow outlook, who pleads the spontaneity of the masses as an excuse for his own sluggishness, who resembles a trade-union secretary more than a spokesman of the people, who is unable to conceive of a broad and bold plan that would command the respect even of opponents, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art—the art of combating the political police—such a man is not a revolutionary, but a wretched amateur!

Let no active worker take offence at these frank remarks, for as far as insufficient training is concerned, I apply them first and foremost to myself. I used to work in a study circle[180]

that set itself very broad, all-embracing tasks; and all of us, members of that circle, suffered painfully and acutely from the realisation that we were acting as amateurs at a moment in history when we might have been able to say, varying a well-known statement: "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia" The more I recall the burning sense of shame I then experienced, the bitterer become my feelings towards those pseudo-Social-Democrats whose preachings "bring disgrace on the calling of a revolutionary", who fail to understand that our task is not to champion the degrading of the revolutionary to the level of an amateur, but *to raise* the amateurs to the level of revolutionaries.

D. THE SCOPE OF ORGANISATIONAL WORK

We have heard B—v tell us about "the lack of revolutionary forces fit for action which is felt not only in St. Petersburg, but throughout Russia". Hardly anyone will dispute this fact. But the question is, how is it to be explained? B—v writes:

> "We shall not go into an explanation of the historical causes of this phenomenon; we shall merely state that a society, demoralised by prolonged political reaction and split by past and present economic changes, promotes from its own ranks *an extremely small number of persons fit for revolutionary work*; that the working class does produce revolutionary workers who to some extent reinforce the ranks of the illegal organisations, but that the number of such revolutionaries is inadequate to meet the requirements of the times. This is all the more so because the worker who spends eleven and a half hours a day in the factory is in such a position that he can, in the main, perform only the functions of an agitator; but propaganda and organisation, the delivery and reproduction of illegal literature, the issuance of leaflets, etc., are duties which must necessarily fall mainly upon the shoulders of an extremely small force of intellectuals" (*Rabocheye Dyelo*, No. 6, pp. 38-39).

On many points we disagree with B—v, particularly with those we have emphasised, which most saliently reveal that, although weary of our amateurism (as is every thinking practical worker), B—v cannot find the way out of this intolerable situation because he is weighted down by Economism. The fact is that society produces very *many* persons fit for

III

CONTRA LOS MENCHEVIQUES

LOS ESTATUTOS DEL PARTIDO

(Discurso pronunciado en el II Congreso del Partido Socialdemócrata Ruso) (XXIII sesión) (1).

La Iskra *y* ¿Qué hacer?, *por la claridad de su doctrina, conquistaron rápidamente a la idea del partido político, unido y centralizado, a la mayoría de los grupos socialdemócratas de Rusia. Por medio de hábiles maniobras, los "agentes" de la* Iskra *"hacían saltar desde el interior", unos después de otros, a los comités economistas.*

Acontecimientos tales como la huelga de Rostov, en marzo de 1902, *acompañada de una manifestación a los gritos de "¡Abajo la autocracia! y ¡Viva la libertad!" testimoniaban que las aspiraciones de los obreros eran no solamente económicas, sino también políticas.*

Por otra parte, la constitución de partidos concurrentes, el de los socialistas revolucionarios y el de la Osvobojdenie (2), *la nueva serie de huelgas que se anunciaba, los movimientos agrarios que se multiplicaban, dictaban la necesidad urgente de la formación del partido político del proletariado.*

En julio de 1902, *el Comité de San Petersburgo se declaró solidario de las ideas de la* Iskra; *la mayor parte de los otros Comités y grupos le siguieron. Lenin que, desde Londres, adonde había trasladado la redacción de la* Iskra, *estaba en relaciones constantes con el movimiento ruso, juzgó llegado el momento: los delegados de la* Iskra, *del Comité de San Petersburgo y de*

(1) *Obras completas*, segunda edición rusa, t. IV, páginas 281-284. *(Red.)*

(2) El partido socialista revolucionario se agrupó alrededor de la revista *La Rusia revolucionaria*, publicada por Gotz y Chernov en el extranjero, hacia fines de 1901. La revista *Osvobojdénie* («Liberación») comenzó a aparecer el 1.º de julio de 1902, bajo la dirección de Struve, y los círculos liberales que se agrupaban en torno a ella tuvieron sus primeros Congresos en julio y septiembre de 1903. *(Red.)*

El Obrero del Sur, organización muy influyente, reunidos en Pskov el 2 de noviembre, eligieron un "Comité de organización" de 3 miembros (completado más tarde con representantes del Bund israelita y de algunas otras organizaciones), encargado de preparar la convocatoria de un segundo Congreso del partido socialdemócrata de Rusia.

El 30 de julio de 1903 se reunieron en Bruselas (1) 51 delegados de 26 organizaciones, de las cuales 5 pertenecían a la emigración. La mayoría era iskrista; contra ella no había más que 5 delegados del Bund y 2 de Raboche Dielo, Martinov y Akimov. Sin embargo, tan pronto empezó la discusión sobre el orden del día, se vió que el bloque de la Iskra no era homogéneo. Por el contrario, sobre los primeros puntos, en las discusiones provocadas a propósito del programa, se vió a Mártov y a Plejanov de acuerdo con Lenin.

Una cuestión relativamente poco importante, la de los Estatutos del partido, dió lugar, en la comisión, y después, en la XXII sesión del Congreso, a un debate que debía tener las más graves consecuencias. La comisión presentaba para el artículo 1 dos fórmulas: la primera, elaborada desde hacía mucho tiempo por Lenin y que, en las reuniones preliminares de los delegados, había sido considerada como la fórmula de la redacción de la Iskra, era la siguiente:

"Se considera como miembro del partido a quienquiera que acepte su programa y sostenga al partido no sólo materialmente, sino también por medio de su participación personal en una de sus organizaciones".

La segunda había sido propuesta por Mártov:

"Se considera como miembro del partido obrero socialdemócrata de Rusia a quienquiera que acepte su programa, sostenga al partido materialmente y le aporte su concurso personal regular, bajo la dirección de una de sus organizaciones".

Para comprender el debate extremadamente confuso que se produjo a este propósito en el Congreso, es preciso darse una idea de cual era entonces la situación. Un delegado nos lo dice: "Tenemos comités se-

(1) El Congreso, abierto en Bruselas, debió, casi inmediatamente disuelto por la policía belga, transladarse a Londres. Las sesiones en Bruselas terminaron el 6 o el 7 de agosto, no es posible fijarlo de un modo concreto, para ser reanudadas en Londres el 11. El congreso terminó el 23. *(Red.)*

cialdemócratas, compuestos por una élite poco numerosa de revolucionarios. El comité está al frente del movimiento obrero local. Tras de él, detrás de estos agitadores, se encuentra una masa de revolucionarios obreros, que distribuyen las proclamas, recogen el dinero, hacen manifestaciones en las calles, van a la cárcel y al destierro, pero que no forman parte ni del comité ni de ninguna otra organización". Había de una parte, una organización de revolucionarios profesionales, estrecha y conspirativa; de otra parte, toda suerte de organizaciones simpatizantes que se aproximaban más o menos a la primera, y, en fin, individuos aislados que ejecutaban diversas misiones para la organización de los revolucionarios.

Para que la socialdemocracia pudiese, en el movimiento político creciente, desempeñar su papel, definido por la Iskra, de guía del proletariado y de todas las oposiciones en la lucha contra la autocracia, hacía falta, evidentemente, extender la noción de partido más allá de los pequeños grupos de revolucionarios profesionales. En esto todos los iskristas estaban de acuerdo; pero para separarse después.

Lenin, que concebía el partido como un ejército destinado a preparar, bajo las órdenes de una autoridad central potente, el asalto general contra el absolutismo, quería que formasen parte del partido únicamente las organizaciones simpatizantes, círculos de fábricas u otras que fuesen reconocidas por el Comité central como "organizaciones del partido", con exclusión de las otras, y sobre todo de los elementos aislados. "Un grupo de repartidores de hojas debe pertenecer al partido obrero socialdemócrata de Rusia y conocer a un cierto número de sus miembros y de sus funcionarios. Un grupo que estudie las condiciones profesionales de trabajo y elabora las reivindicaciones profesionales no debe necesariamente pertenecer al partido socialdemócrata. Un grupo de estudiantes, de oficiales, de empleados, que se ocupen de instrucción mutua, con la participación de uno o dos miembros del partido, no debe saber siquiera, a veces, que estos últimos son miembros del partido". La organización de los revolucionarios profesionales, prudentemente ampliada, se convertía en el partido, se confundía con él.

A esta concepción se oponía la que conservaba la

organización de los revolucionarios pero le oponía el partido como un punto de reunión de todas las organizaciones simpatizantes, de todos los individuos que se declaraban socialdemócratas. Obrar de otra manera, decían Axelrod y algunos otros, es dejar de lado a numerosos catedráticos, estudiantes de Instituto, obreros cargados de familia a quienes sus condiciones de existencia impiden entrar en una organización llegada o estrictamente disciplinada, pero que no por eso son menos abnegados por la causa. Es crear un partido de conspiradores y no un partido de clase. Es preciso, por el contrario, afirma Mártov, que "todo participante en una huelga o una manifestación pueda, si se le piden cuentas de sus actos, declararse miembro del partido. "¡Cuanto más extendido esté el título de miembro del partido, tanto mejor!".

En tanto que muchos iskristas se separaban de Lenin en lo que se refiere a esta definición de "miembro del partido", la representante del Comité de la organización obrera de San Petersburgo (1) Lidia Majnóvets (llamada Broukere en el Congreso), aunque hostil, desde luego, al espíritu centralista del proyecto, reconoció que "los simpatizantes que, de cuando en cuando, prestan tal o cual servicio, no pueden ser considerados como miembros del partido, pues, éste debe tener sólo miembros activos" y que "todos los miembros activos pertenezcan a tal o cual fracción de la organización, la cual abraza las funciones de todas suertes que le son necesarias". El acuerdo de una "economista" como Broukere con Lenin fué, naturalmente, señalado por Mártov.

En el curso de la discusión, Plejánov intervino, diciendo que acababa de decidirse en favor de Lenin, y respondió a las objeciones. "Nada puede impedir, al que lo quiera, entrar en una organización del partido. En cuanto a los que no quieren, no tenemos necesidad de ellos. El profesor que estima por debajo de su dignidad entrar en una organización no nos interesa. Si ante un tribunal, un acusado dice que él simpatiza con el partido, pero que no pertenece a él porque no se

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ltsface todas sus exigencias, esto no hará sino elevar la autoridad del partido. El proyecto de Lenin no cierra de ninguna manera la puerta a una multitud de obreros: no son los obreros los que temerán entrar en una organización, sino solamente los intelectuales saturados de individualismo burgués, y esto felizmente, pues son de ordinario los portavoces de todos los oportunismos. Por el proyecto de Lenin deben, pues, votar todos los adversarios del oportunismo".

Trotsky protestó contra esta conclusión: los oportunistas son muy capaces de organizarse también, y sobre todo los intelectuales; "los círculos de estudiantes de los Institutos, las asociaciones de estudiantes, las organizaciones de la Cruz Roja son infinitamente más durables que las organizaciones obreras amplias, destruidas constantemente por las huelgas, las crisis, y en fin, la movilidad de los obreros. Lenin, y sobre todo Plejánov, creen haber imaginado un medio de desembarazar la socialdemocracia de los intelectuales corruptores que seducen a la juventud para entregarla después a Struve: se equivocan, pues esos intelectuales encontrarán siempre el medio de entrar en una organización o de formarla".

En este momento Lenin tomó la palabra (1):

En primer lugar, dos observaciones de carácter particular.

La primera, sobre la amable proposición (lo digo sin ironía), hecha por Axelrod, de "entendernos" (2). Consentiría en ello con mucho gusto, pues, no estimo nuestra divergencia tan seria que de ella dependa la vida o la muerte de nuestro partido. ¡No es un mal artículo de

(1) Las actas del Congreso, de las cuales el discurso que sigue ha sido tomado, no son estenográficas, sino analíticas. De donde se deduce: 1.º, que no tenemos aquí el texto exacto de las palabras de Lenin; 2.º, que hay en ellas alusiones a muchos argumentos de sus contradictores que no están mencionados en el análisis de sus discursos. *(Red.)*

(2) Axelrod había terminado su discurso observando que Lenin, con sus círculos de la periferia entrando en la organización del partido» (los círculos de fábricas admitidos en el partido si lo desean y si el Comité central les juzga dignos de ello) respondía a su deseo «Quedan aún los aislados, pero sobre este punto podríamos también entendernos todavía». *(Red.)*

21

SECOND SPEECH IN THE DISCUSSION ON THE PARTY RULES

August 2 (15)

I should like first of all to make two remarks on minor points. First, on the subject of Axelrod's kind proposal (I am not speaking ironically) to "strike a bargain". I would willingly respond to this appeal, for I by no means consider our difference so vital as to be a matter of life or death to the Party. We shall certainly not perish because of an unfortunate clause in the Rules! But since it has come to the point of choosing between *two* formulations, I simply cannot abandon my firm conviction that Martov's formulation is *worse* than the original draft and *may*, in certain circumstances, cause no little harm to the Party. The second remark concerns Comrade Brucker.[143] It is only natural for Comrade Brucker, who wishes to apply the elective principle everywhere, to have accepted my formulation, the only one that defines at all exactly the concept of a Party *member*. I therefore fail to understand Comrade Martov's delight at Comrade Brucker's agreement with me. Is it possible that in actual fact Comrade Martov makes a point of *guiding* himself by the opposite of what Brucker says, without examining his motives and arguments?

To come to the main subject, I must say that Comrade Trotsky has completely misunderstood Comrade Plekhanov's fundamental idea, and his arguments have therefore evaded the gist of the matter. He has spoken of intellectuals and workers, of the class point of view and of the mass movement, but he has failed to notice a basic question: does my formulation narrow or expand the concept of a Party

member? If he had asked himself that question, he would easily have seen that my formulation narrows this concept, while Martov's expands it, for (to use Martov's own correct expression) what distinguishes his concept is its "elasticity". And in the period of Party life that we are now passing through it is just this "elasticity" that undoubtedly opens the door to all elements of confusion, vacillation, and opportunism. To refute this simple and obvious conclusion it has to be proved that there are no such elements; but it has not even occurred to Comrade Trotsky to do that. Nor can that be proved, for everyone knows that such elements exist in plenty, and that they are to be found in the working class too. The need to safeguard the firmness of the Party's line and the purity of its principles has now become particularly urgent, for, with the restoration of its unity, the Party will recruit into its ranks a great many unstable elements, whose number will increase with the growth of the Party. Comrade Trotsky completely misinterpreted the main idea of my book, *What Is to Be Done?*, when he spoke about the Party not being a conspiratorial organisation (many others too raised this objection). He forgot that in my book I propose a number of various types of organisations, from the most secret and most exclusive to comparatively broad and "loose" (*lose*) organisations.* He forgot that the Party must be only the vanguard, the leader of the vast masses of the working class, the whole (or nearly the whole) of which works "under the control and direction" of the Party organisations, but the whole of which does not and should not belong to a "party". Now let us see what conclusions Comrade Trotsky arrives at in consequence of his fundamental mistake. He has told us here that if rank after rank of workers were arrested, and all the workers were to declare that they did not belong to the Party, our Party would be a strange one indeed! Is it not the other way round? Is it not Comrade Trotsky's argument that is strange? He regards as something sad that which a revolutionary with any experience at all would only rejoice at. If hundreds and thousands of workers who were arrested for taking part in strikes and demonstrations did not prove

* See present edition, Vol. 5.—*Ed.*

to be members of Party organisations, it would only show that we have good organisations, and that we are fulfilling our task of keeping a more or less limited circle of leaders secret and of drawing the broadest possible masses into the movement.

The root of the mistake made by those who stand for Martov's formulation is that they not only ignore one of the main evils of our Party life, but even sanctify it. The evil is that, at a time when political discontent is almost universal, when conditions require our work to be carried on in complete secrecy, and when most of our activities have to be confined to limited, secret circles and even to private meetings, it is extremely difficult, almost impossible in fact, for us to distinguish those who only talk from those who do the work. There is hardly another country in the world where the jumbling of these two categories is as common and as productive of such boundless confusion and harm as in Russia. We are suffering sorely from this evil not only among the intelligentsia, but also among the working class, and Comrade Martov's formulation sanctions it. This formulation necessarily tends to make Party members of *all and sundry*; Comrade Martov himself was forced to admit this, although with a reservation: "Yes, if you like," he said. But that is precisely what we do not like! And that is precisely why we are so adamant in our opposition to Martov's formulation. It would be better if ten who do work should not call themselves Party members (real workers don't hunt after titles!) than that one who only talks should have the right and opportunity to be a Party member. That is a principle which seems to me irrefutable, and which compels me to fight against Martov. The objection has been presented to me that we confer no rights on Party members, and that therefore there can be no abuses. This kind of objection is quite untenable: if we do not state what particular rights a Party member enjoys, please note that neither do we say that there is to be any restriction on the rights of Party members. That is point one. Secondly—and this is the main point—irrespective even of rights, we must not forget that every Party member is responsible for the Party, and that *the Party is responsible for every one of its members*. In view of the conditions in

which we have to carry on our political activities, in view of the present rudimentary state of real political organisation, it would be simply dangerous and harmful to grant the right of membership to people who are not members of a Party organisation and to make the Party responsible for people who do not belong to an organisation (perhaps deliberately). Comrade Martov was horrified at the idea that one who is not a member of a Party organisation will have no right to declare in court that he is a Party member, however energetically he may have done his work. That does not frighten me. On the contrary, serious harm would be done if a person who calls himself a Party member, even though he does not belong to any Party organisation, were to behave unworthily in court. It would be impossible to deny that such a person was working under the control and direction of the organisation—impossible because of the very vagueness of the term. Actually—and there can be no doubt about this—the words "under the control and direction" will mean that *there will be neither control nor direction*. The Central Committee will never be able to exercise real control over all who do the work but do not belong to organisations. It is our task to place *actual* control in the hands of the Central Committee. It is our task to safeguard the firmness, consistency, and purity of our Party. We must strive to raise the title and the significance of a Party member higher, higher and still higher—and I therefore oppose Martov's formulation.

cisamente, a causa del carácter vago de la expresión. En la práctica, la cosa está fuera de duda; estas palabras "bajo la vigilancia y la dirección" harán que no haya *ni vigilancia ni dirección*. Jamás el Comité central podrá ejercer una vigilancia verdadera sobre gentes que militan, pero que no forman parte de ninguna organización. Nuestro deber es dar al Comité central la posibilidad de ejercer una vigilancia *efectiva*. Nuestro deber es salvaguardar la firmeza, mantener la pureza de nuestro partido. Debemos esforzarnos por elevar el nombre y el valor de miembro del partido más alto, aún más alto, siempre más alto, y por esto es por lo que estoy contra la fórmula de Mártov.

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El debate se terminó por un voto nominal que rechazó la fórmula de Lenin por 28 votos contra 23 y adoptó la de Mártov contra 22 y 1 abstención. Se vió a los representantes del Bund *y de la* Unión de los socialdemócratas rusos en el extranjero, — antiiskristas — y *"economistas", unirse a Mártov y a los "débiles" de la* Iskra *contra la mayoría de los "fuertes", fiel a Lenin. A partir de este momento, sin que ello se deje traslucir en las actas del Congreso, las dos "fracciones" toman la costumbre de celebrar sus reuniones particulares en salas diferentes.*

Parecía, pues, evidente que la fracción de Lenin estaba en minoría; pero se produjo un incidente que debilitó a su adversario: los delegados del Bund, *descontentos por haber sido rechazados sus Estatutos federalistas, y los de la* Unión de los socialdemócratas rusos, *cuya disolución había sido implícitamente pronunciada, abandonaron el Congreso.*

La división se produjo definitivamente al procederse a la elección de los redactores de la Iskra, *convertida en órgano central del partido, y de los miembros del Comité Central y del Consejo del partido* (1). *Mártov y*

(1) El Consejo del partido estaba concebido como la autoridad suprema, que en caso necesario, debía servir de árbitro entre el Comité central (en Rusia) y la redacción del órgano central (en el extranjero). *(Red.)*

sus amigos, entre ellos Trotsky, querían conservar, a pesar de la tirantez ya manifestada en su seno, la antigua redacción de seis miembros; Lenin quería hacer elegir una nueva, más homogénea, de tres miembros. Lenin triunfó, por 19 votos contra 17 y 3 abstenciones. Mártov declaró entonces, en su nombre y en el de Póssov, Axelrod y Zasulich, que se negarían en todo caso a entrar en la nueva redacción. Elegido, sin embargo, con Plejánov y Lenin, Mártov repitió que no consentiría a ningún precio en convertirse en un instrumento entre las manos de dos hombres que detentarían de hecho, en el porvenir, el poder en el partido. Cuando se trató de elegir el Comité central, Mártov y los miembros de la "minoría" en número de 20, se negaron a tomar parte en la votación.

La lucha por el poder en el partido había provocado una verdadera escisión. Lenin había declarado francamente, en respuesta a las lamentaciones de Mártov: "La actividad de la Iskra ha consistido hasta aquí en la lucha por la influencia.....; hoy se trata de algo más, de consolidar materialmente esta influencia... Mártov me reprocha que quiero influir en el Comité central, y yo considero un mérito haber querido y querer aún consolidar esta influencia materialmente. Hablamos dos lenguajes diferentes... Sí, el camarada Mártov tiene completamente razón: realizamos un gran acto político, exteriorizado por la elección que hemos hecho de una de las tendencias que se dibujan actualmente en el partido. Las expresiones alarmantes de "estado de sitio en el partido", de "leyes de excepción contra tales o cuales personas o grupos", etc., no me asustan ni mucho menos. Con respecto a los elementos inestables y vacilantes tenemos no solamente el derecho, sino el deber, de instituir un "estado de sitio". Nuestros Estatutos, nuestro centralismo, aprobados por el Congreso, no son otra cosa que un "estado de sitio" declarado contra los innumerables elementos de confusión política. Contra la confusión hacen falta leyes especiales, aunque sean de excepción, y la decisión adoptada por el congreso inaugura la tendencia política que conviene, facilitando una base sólida para leyes y medidas de este género".

UN PASO ADLEANTE, DOS PASOS ATRÁS

(LA CRISIS DE NUESTRO PARTIDO) (1).

El tono violento y personal que había tomado la discusión entre la mayoría y la minoría del partido debía forzosamente envenenar las cosas. Fué sobre todo en la emigración en donde se desencadenó la lucha.

Inmediatamente después del Congreso, la minoría comenzó a boicotear a las autoridades centrales elegidas contra su opinión: a pesar de las invitaciones, orales y escritas, de Lenin, que les mostraba la desorganización que esto producía en el trabajo del partido, los antiguos redactores de la Iskra *cesaron su colaboración en el periódico.*

Al mismo tiempo la oposición distribuía en Rusia folletos como el de Mártov Una vez más en minoría, *en que denunciaba el absolutismo de Lenin, el formalismo burocrático que quería hacer reinar en el partido, la obediencia mecánica que exigía, el terror que declaraba contra los antiguos camaradas.*

A fines de octubre de 1903, *la minoría del partido reunió un Congreso de la* Liga de la socialdemocracia revolucionaria (*organización fundada por Plejánov en el momento de su ruptura, en* 1900, *con la* Unión de los socialdemócratas rusos en el extranjero), *donde sabía que estaba en mayoría. La división del partido apareció más claramente que nunca: Lenin, ponente, expuso los acontecimientos del Congreso del partido, demostrando, por medio del análisis de los votos, que la minoría de los* iskristas *había hecho bloque, en realidad, con todos los elementos oportunistas o vacilantes; Mártov, coponente, pronunció un discurso indignado, pidiendo al partido que decidiese entre Lenin y él, quejándose en términos patéticos de las intrigas, de las maniobras y de las mentiras de la mayoría. En fin,*

(1) *Obras completas*, primera edición, t. V, páginas 452-472, capítulo XVII del folleto. *(Red.)*

cuando el representante del Comité central invitó a la Liga a poner su estatuto interior en armonía con la nueva organización del partido, el Congreso se negó a someterse: era la rebelión declarada. Entonces los partidarios de la mayoría del partido se retiraron, como relata Lenin, "para no tomar parte en una indigna comedia".

Inmediatamente después de este escandaloso Congreso, Pleiánov, que no se resignaba a la escisión, emprendió negociaciones en el sentido de hacer entrar en la redacción de la Iskra, por cooptación, a los cuatro antiguos redactores, con lo cual esperaba obtener la paz. Esto era anular, por complacer el individualismo anárquico de un "círculo", la decisión del partido. Lenin, contrario a este arreglo, se retiró de la redacción el 1 de noviembre de 1903.

A partir de este momento, Lenin tiene en contra suya no solamente a Mártov, Axelrod y sus amigos, sino a Pleiánov, que hasta aquí le había sostenido, y ahora le acusa también de obstaculizar por su intransigencia la unidad del partido. La era de la nueva Iskra, entre las manos de aquellos a quienes se iba a llamar los "mencheviques", comenzaba.

La concesión de Plejánov no había servido para nada: la oposición reclamaba ahora la "cooptación" de un cierto número de sus miembros al Comité Central. Lenin hizo aún, en enero de 1904, en el Consejo del partido, una tentativa de "paz", proponiendo dejar las cosas en el estado en que estaban: la Iskra a la minoría, el Comité Central a la mayoría, y la cesación de todo boicot, de todas las exigencias de "cooptación", para reducir la diferencia a las cuestiones de principio. La proposición fué rechazada. La "paz" parecía desde ese momento imposible. La nueva Iskra, después de haber guardado al principio una cierta moderación, se convertía en el órgano exclusivo de una tendencia que, cada vez más, se limitaba a ataques personales contra Lenin, sin dejar de invocar los principios de la verdadera democracia en el partido. Mártov publicaba su folleto sobre La lucha contra el estado de sitio en el partido socialdemócrata, en que repetía contra Lenin las acusaciones de centralismo excesivo, de burocratismo, de bonapartismo, de jacobinismo, etc. Lenin, después de un instante de desaliento, en que pensó en par-

tir a América a fin de consagrarse a trabajos de estadística, decidió librar la batalla a la luz del día, y, en abril de 1904, escribió un folleto en el cual examina todos los acontecimientos desarrollados desde el comienzo del Congreso del partido, que analiza desde su punto de vista. Tomando como punto de partida su discurso del Congreso de la Liga para desenvolverlo en todos su puntos, demuestra cual es el origen del desacuerdo, la colición inquietante de Mártov con los economistas de ayer y con el "pantano"; su actitud de oposición al principio lead; después, su manera de cubrir mediante pretendidos principios su despecho de no haber sido elegido para los órganos directores del partido; sus actitudes desorganizadoras y "anárquicas" de boicot; en fin, todos los ataques de la minoría después del Congreso, ataques motivados únicamente por el deseo de hacer entrar por cooptación a miembros de la minoría en la dirección del partido. El folleto se intitula Un paso adelante, dos pasos atrás, *porque por su negativa a someterse a la mayoría, la minoría lleva al partido, constituido al fin en el Congreso de Londres, a lo que era en la época de los círculos.*

Uno de los principales y de los más serios documentos publicados por los adversarios de Lenin eran los dos folletones de Axelrod, aparecidos el 15 de diciembre de 1903 y el 15 de enero de 1904 en la nueva Iskra *bajo los títulos* La unificación de la socialdemocracia rusa y sus objetivos y Resultados de la liquidación del primitivismo. *Axelrod demostraba en ellos que en los otros países la socialdemocracia se confunde verdaderamente con la élite de la clase obrera, en tanto que en Rusia, a causa de las particularidades históricas, económicas y sociales del país, es un grupo de revolucionarios exteriores a la clase obrera y que ve el interés de la revolución en la subordinación cada vez más completa de los obreros a su dirección. De ahí una contradicción entre el fin de la socialdemocracia, que es la liberación de la clase obrera, y el medio, que es la subordinación de la clase obrera a un grupo burgués radical. Tal es la idea del artículo, pero a este respecto Axelrod hacía algunas alusiones a los principios centralistas preconizados por Lenin y adoptados en el Congreso, calificándolos de absolutismo burocrático*

y de jacobinismo. Lenin responde a esto en el capítulo que el lector va a leer.

El folleto Un paso adelante, dos pasos atrás, *fué escrito de una plumada, como lo atestigua el manuscrito, casi sin correcciones, en abril de 1904, en Ginebra. Bontch-Brouévich, que dirigía las ediciones del partido, relata cómo los mencheviques hicieron todo lo posible por retrasar su composición e impresión. El folleto apareció en la primera quincena de mayo. En el momento mismo en que comenzaban a expedirse los ejemplares ya prestos, el representante del Comité Central del partido dió la orden de suspender la operación, pero se hizo caso omiso de esta orden.*

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LA NUEVA "ISKRA".

EL OPORTUNISMO EN MATERIA DE ORGANIZACIÓN.

Para analizar la posición de principio de la *nueva Iskra*, es necesario tomar como base los dos folletones de Axelrod. La significación concreta de varias de sus locuciones favoritas ha sido indicada ya en detalle más arriba (1); tratemos ahora de hacer abstracción de ella, de seguir el desarrollo del pensamiento que ha conducido a la "minoría" (en tal o cual ocasión mezquina y fútil) a adoptar precisamente estas consignas y no otras, y de examinar la transcendencia de estas últimas, independientemente de su origen, independientemente de la "cooptación" (2).

Vivimos ahora bajo el signo de las concesiones: hagamos, pues, una al camarada Axelrod y "tomemos en serio" su teoría. La tesis fundamental del compañero Axelrod (núm. 57 de la *Iskra*) es ésta: "Hemos tenido

(1) En un capítulo precedente intitulado «Después del Congreso. — Dos procedimientos de lucha», Lenin muestra que las acusaciones de absolutismo y de centralismo burocrático encubren una concepción en realidad anárquica y oportunista. *(Red.)*

(2) Lenin afirma, en efecto, varias veces, que toda la campaña de la oposición está en el fondo suscitada por el deseo de hacer entrar a los suyos por cooptación en los organismos superiores del partido. *(Red.)*

tes (1), *Statutarische Festlegung*) y así, reforzar el carácter riguroso (grossere Straffheit) de la organización".

Así, en el partido alemán, como entre nosotros, vemos la lucha entre el ala oportunista y el ala revolucionaria alrededor de la cuestión de organización, el conflicto entre el autonomismo y el centralismo, entre la democracia y el "burocratismo", entre la tendencia favorable al debilitamiento de la severidad de la organización y de la disciplina, y la tendencia favorable al reforzamiento de las mismas, entre la psicología del intelectual inconstante y la psicología del proletario consecuente, entre el individualismo intelectual y la cohesión proletaria.

¿Cuál ha sido en este conflicto la actitud de la *democracia burguesa*, que tiene en Alemania representantes no menos sabios ni menos observadores que nuestros señores de la *Osvobojdénie*? (2).

La democracia burguesa en Alemania ha reaccionado inmediatamente ante la nueva querella y, como en Rusia y fuera de Rusia, ha tomado inmediatamente partido por el ala oportunista del partido socialdemócrata. El principal órgano del capital bancario en Alemania, *La Gaceta de Francfort*, ha publicado un resonante editorial (7 de abril de 1904) que demuestra que la manía de plagiar a Axelrod se convierte literalmente en una especie de enfermedad de la prensa ale-

(1) Es extraordinariamente instructivo confrontar estas observaciones de Kautsky sobre la sustitución del derecho consuetudinario tácitamente reconocido por un derecho formalmente inscrito en los estatutos con toda la «renovación» sobrevenida en nuestro partido, en general, y en la redacción en particular, después del Congreso del partido. Véase el discurso de V. Zasulitch en el Congreso de la Liga. Nuestra compañera, probablemente, no se da enteramente cuenta de la transcendencia de esta renovación. *(L.)*

(2) *La Liberación*, órgano ilegal, publicado en París, de la *Liga de la Liberación*, fundada en el verano de 1903 por Struve y los liberales burgueses. La *Liga* admitía en su seno incluso a los individuos pertenecientes ya un partido, buscando así el medio de atraer a los socialdemócratas. *(Red.)*

mann. Los feroces demócratas de la Bolsa de Francfort flagelan a la "autocracia" en el partido socialdemócrata, a la "dictadura del partido", a la "dominación tiránica de los jefes del partido", a esas "excomuniones" mediante las cuales se quiere "castigar, por así decirlo, a todo el revisionismo" (recordad lo de "la calumniosa acusación de oportunismo"); a esta "obediencia ciega", a esta "disciplina que mata" y a esta "sumisión de lacayo" que se exigen y que transforman a los miembros del partido en "cadáveres políticos". (¡He aquí algo todavía mucho más fuerte que las "ruedas" y los "tornillos"!). Toda originalidad, gritan con indignación los caballeros de la Bolsa a propósito del régimen "antidemocrático" de la socialdemocracia, toda individualidad debe estar a merced de las persecuciones, porque amenaza con conducir al régimen francés, al jauresismo y al millerandismo, como lo ha declarado sin rodeos Zindermann, ponente acerca de esta cuestión, en el Congreso de los socialdemócratas sajones.

Así las nuevas elucubraciones de la nueva *Iskra* sobre la cuestión de la organización son, no hay la menor duda, oportunistas.

. . . . . .

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A pesar de la guerra ruso-japonesa, comenzada el 27 de enero de 1904, a pesar del vasto movimiento de huelgas y de manifestaciones obreras que se extendía por todo el Sur de Rusia, a pesar de las graves cuestiones políticas planteadas por la incapacidad y la corrupción cada vez más evidentes del régimen, el folleto de Lenin fué objeto, durante largos meses, de una vasta y viva polémica. Entre los socialdemócratas rusos en el extranjero, los mencheviques le atacaron fre-

peace was not possible on the basis of the following division: you take the Central Organ, we take the Central Committee. Neither side will then feel "alien" in the Party, and we will argue about the swing towards opportunism, first in the press, and then, perhaps, at the Third Party Congress.

In reply to this mention of peace the enemy opened fire with all his-batteries, including even the Council. ShelIs rained on my head. Autocrat, Schweitzer,[115] bureaucrat, formalist, supercentre, one-sided, stiff-necked, obstinate, narrow-minded, suspicious, quarrelsome.... Very well, my friends! Have you finished? You have nothing more in reserve? Poor ammunition, I must say....

Now comes my turn. Let us examine the *content* of the new *Iskra*'s new views on organisation and the relation of these views to that division of our Party into "majority" and "minority" the true character of which we have shown by our analysis of the debates and voting at the Second Congress.

Q. THE NEW *ISKRA*. OPPORTUNISM IN QUESTIONS OF ORGANISATION

As the basis for an analysis of the principles of the new *Iskra* we should unquestionably take the two articles of Comrade Axelrod.* The concrete meaning of some of his favourite catchwords has already been shown at length. Now we must try to leave their concrete meaning on one side and delve down to the line of thought that caused the "minority" to arrive (in connection with this or that minor and petty matter) at these particular slogans rather than any others, must examine the principles behind these slogans, irrespective of their origin, irrespective of the question of "co-optation". Concessions are all the fashion nowadays, so let us make a concession to Comrade Axelrod and take his "theory" "seriously".

Comrade Axelrod's basic thesis (*Iskra*, No. 57) is that "from the very outset our movement harboured two opposite trends, whose mutual antagonism could not fail to develop

* These articles were included in the collection "*Iskra*" *over Two Years*, Part II, p. 122 et seq. (St. Petersburg, 1906). (Author's note to 1907 edition.—*Ed.*)

and to affect the movement parallel with its own development". To be specific: "In principle, the proletarian aim of the movement [in Russia] is the same as that of western Social-Democracy." But in our country the masses of the workers are influenced "by a social element alien to them", namely, the radical intelligentsia. And so, Comrade Axelrod establishes the existence of an antagonism between the proletarian and the radical-intellectual trend in our Party.

In this Comrade Axelrod is undoubtedly right. The existence of such an antagonism (and not in the Russian Social-Democratic Party alone) is beyond question. What is more, everyone knows that it is this antagonism that largely accounts for the division of present-day Social-Democracy into revolutionary (also known as orthodox) and opportunist (revisionist, ministerialist, reformist) Social-Democracy, which during the past ten years of our movement has become fully apparent in Russia too. Everyone also knows that the proletarian trend of the movement is expressed by orthodox Social-Democracy, while the trend of the democratic intelligentsia is expressed by opportunist Social-Democracy.

But, after so closely approaching this piece of common knowledge, Comrade Axelrod begins timidly to back away from it. He does not make *the slightest attempt* to analyse how this division manifested itself in the history of Russian Social-Democracy in general, and at our Party Congress in particular, although it is about the Congress that he is writing! Like all the other editors of the new *Iskra*, Comrade Axelrod displays a *mortal fear* of the minutes of this Congress. This should not surprise us after all that has been said above, but in a "theoretician" who claims to be investigating the different trends in our movement it is certainly a queer case of *truth-phobia*. Backing away, because of this malady, from the latest and most accurate material on the trends in our movement, Comrade Axelrod seeks salvation in the sphere of pleasant daydreaming. He writes: "Has not legal Marxism, or semi-Marxism, provided our liberals with a literary leader? Why should not prankish history provide revolutionary bourgeois democracy with a leader from the school of orthodox, revolutionary Marxism?" All we can say about this daydream which Comrade Axelrod

finds so pleasant is that if history does sometimes play pranks, that is no excuse for *pranks of thought* on the part of people who undertake to analyse history. When the liberal peeped out from under the cloak of the leader of semi-Marxism, those who wished (*and were able*) to trace his "trend" did not allude to possible pranks of history, but pointed to tens and hundreds of instances of that leader's mentality and logic, to alI those characteristics of his literary make-up which betrayed the reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature.[116] And if Comrade Axelrod, setting out to analyse "the general-revolutionary and the proletarian trend in our movement", could produce *nothing*, *absolutely nothing*, in proof or evidence that certain representatives of that orthodox wing of the Party which he so detests showed such and such a trend, he thereby issued *a formal certificate of his own poverty*. Comrade Axelrod's case must be weak indeed if all he can do is allude to possible pranks of history!

Comrade Axelrod's other allusion—to the "Jacobins"—is still more revealing. Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the division of present-day Social-Democracy into revolutionary and opportunist has long since given rise—and not only in Russia—to "historical parallels with the era of the great French Revolution". Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the *Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy* everywhere and always resort to the terms "Jacobinism", "Blanquism", and so on to describe their opponents. Let us then not imitate Comrade Axelrod's truth-phobia, let us consult the minutes of our Congress and see whether they offer any material for an analysis and examination of the trends we are considering and the parallels we are discussing.

First example: the Party Congress debate on the programme. Comrade Akimov ("fully agreeing" with Comrade Martynov) says: "The clause on the capture of political power [the dictatorship of the proletariat] has been formulated in such a way—as compared with the programmes of all other Social-Democratic parties—that it may be interpreted, and actually has been interpreted by Plekhanov, to mean that the role of the leading organisation will relegate to-the background the class it is leading and separate the former from the latter. Consequently, the formulation of our polit-

ical tasks is exactly the same as in the case of Narodnaya Volya." (Minutes, p. 124.) Comrade Plekhanov and other *Iskra*-ists take issue with Comrade Akimov and accuse him of opportunism. Does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute shows us (in actual fact, and not-in the imaginary pranks of history) the antagonism between the *present-day Jacobins* and the present-day *Girondists* of Social-Democracy? And was it not because he found himself in the company of the *Girondists* of Social-Democracy (owing to the mistakes he committed) that Comrade Axelrod began talking about Jacobins?

Second example: Comrade Posadovsky declares that there is a "serious difference of opinion" over the "fundamental question" of "the absolute value of democratic principles" (p. 169). Together with Plekhanov, he denies their absolute value. The leaders of the "Centre" or Marsh (Egorov) and of the anti-*Iskra*-ists (Goldblatt) vehemently oppose this view and accuse Plekhanov of "imitating bourgeois tactics" (p. 170). *This is exactly Comrade Axelrod's idea of a connection between orthodoxy and the bourgeois trend*, the only difference being that in Axelrod's case it is vague and general, whereas Goldblatt linked it up with specific issues. Again we ask: does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute, too, shows us *palpably*, at our Party Congress, the antagonism between the Jacobins and the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy? Is it not because he finds himself in the company of the Girondists that Comrade Axelrod raises this outcry against the Jacobins?

Third example: the debate on Paragraph 1 of the Rules. Who is it that defends "*the proletarian trend in our movement*"? Who is it that insists that the worker is not afraid of organisation, that the proletarian has no sympathy for anarchy, that he values the incentive to organise? Who is it that warns us against the bourgeois intelligentsia, permeated through and through with opportunism? *The Jacobins of Social-Democracy*. And who is it that tries to smuggle radical intellectuals in the Party? Who is it that is concerned about professors, high-school students, free lances, the radical youth? *The Girondist Axelrod together with the Girondist Lieber*.

How clumsily Comrade Axelrod defends himself against the "false accusation of opportunism" that at our Party Congress was openly levelled at the majority of the Emancipation of Labour group! By taking up the hackneyed Bernsteinian refrain about Jacobinism, Blanquism, and so on, he defends himself in a manner that only bears out the accusation! He shouts about the menace of the radical intellectuals in order to drown out his own speeches at the Party Congress, which were full of concern for these intellectuals.

These "dreadful words"—Jacobinism and the rest—are expressive of *opportunism* and nothing else. A Jacobin who wholly identities himself with the *organisation* of the proletariat—a proletariat *conscious* of its class interests—is a *revolutionary Social-Democrat*. A Girondist who sighs after professors and high-school students, who is afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and who yearns for the absolute value of democratic demands is an *opportunist*. It is only opportunists who can still detect a danger in conspiratorial organisations today, when the idea of confining the political struggle to conspiracy has been refuted thousands of times in the press and has long been refuted and swept aside by the realities of life, and when the cardinal importance of mass political agitation has been elucidated and reiterated to the point of nausea. The real basis of this fear of conspiracy, of Blanquism, is not any feature to be found in the practical movement (as Bernstein and Co. have long, and vainly, been trying to make out), but the Girondist timidity of the bourgeois intellectual, whose mentality so often shows itself among the Social-Democrats of today. Nothing could be more comical than these laborious efforts of the new *Iskra* to utter a *new word* of warning (uttered hundreds of times before) against the tactics of the French conspirator revolutionaries of the forties and sixties (No. 62, editorial).[117] In the next issue of *Iskra*, the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy will no doubt show us a group of French conspirators of the forties for whom the importance of political agitation among the working masses, the importance of the labour press as the principal means by which the party influences the class, was an elementary truth they had learned and assimilated long ago.

However, the tendency of the new *Iskra* to repeat the elements and go back to the ABC while pretending to be uttering something new is not fortuitous; it is an inevitable consequence of the situation Axelrod and Martov find themselves in, now that they have landed in the opportunist wing of our Party. There is nothing for it. They have to repeat the opportunist phrases, they have to *go back*, in order to try to find in the *remote past* some sort of justification for their position, which is indefensible from the point of view of the struggle at the Congress and of the shades and divisions in the Party that took shape there. To the Akimovite profundities about Jacobinism and Blanquism, Comrade Axelrod adds Akimovite lamentations to the effect that not only the "Economists", but the "politicians" as well, were "one-sided", excessively "infatuated", and so on and so forth. Reading the high-flown disquisitions on this subject in the new *Iskra*, which conceitedly claims to be above all this one-sidedness and infatuation, one asks in perplexity: whose portrait is it they are painting? where is it that they hear such talk?[118] Who does not know that the division of the Russian Social-Democrats into Economists and politicians has long been obsolete? Go through the files of *Iskra* for the last year or two before the Party Congress, and you will find that the fight against "Economism" subsided and came to an end altogether as far back as 1902; you will find, for example, that in July 1903 (No. 43), "the times of Economism" are spoken of as being "definitely over", Economism is considered "dead and buried", and any infatuations of the politicians are regarded as obvious atavism. Why, then, do the new editors, of *Iskra* revert to this dead and buried division? Did we fight the Akimovs at the Congress on account of the mistakes they made in *Rabocheye Dyelo* two years ago? If we had, we should have been sheer idiots. But everyone knows that we did not, that it was not for their old, dead and buried mistakes in *Rabocheye Dyelo* that we fought the Akimovs at the Congress, but for the *new mistakes* they committed in their arguments and their voting at the Congress. It was not by their stand in *Rabocheye Dyelo*, but by their stand at the Congress, that we judged which mistakes were really a thing of the past and which still lived and called for controversy. By the time of the Congress the

old division into Economists and politicians no longer existed; but various opportunist trends continued to exist. They found expression in the debates and voting on a number of issues, and finally led to a new division of the Party into "majority?" and "minority". The whole point is that the new editors of *Iskra* are, for obvious reasons, trying to gloss over the connection between this new division and *contemporary* opportunism in our Party, and are, in consequence, compelled to go back from the new division to the old one. Their inability to explain the political origin of the new division (or their desire, in order to prove how accommodating they are, to cast a veil* over its origin) compels them to keep harping on a division that has long been obsolete. Everyone knows that the new division is based on a difference over questions of *organisation*, which began with the controversy over principles of organisation (Paragraph 1 of the Rules) and ended up with a "practice" worthy of anarchists. The old division into Economists and politicians was based mainly on a difference over questions of *tactics*.

In its efforts to justify this retreat from the more complex, truly topical and burning issues of Party life to issues that have long been settled and have now been dug up artificially, the new *Iskra* resorts to an amusing display of profundity for which there can be no other name than tail-ism. Started by Comrade Axelrod, there runs like a a crimson thread through all the writing of the new *Iskra* the profound "idea" that content is more important than

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* See Plekhanov's article on "Economism" in No. 53 of *Iskra*. The subtitle of the article appears to contain a slight misprint. Instead of "Reflections on the Second Party Congress", it should apparently read, "on the *League* Congress", or even "on *Co-optation*". However appropriate concessions to personal claims may be under certain circumstances, it is quite inadmissible (from the Party, not the philistine standpoint) to confuse the issues that are agitating the Party and to substitute for the new mistake of Martov and Axelrod, who have begun to swing from orthodoxy towards opportunism, the old mistake (never recalled today by anyone except the new *Iskra*) of the Martynovs and Akimovs, who perhaps may now be prepared to swing from opportunism towards orthodoxy on many questions of programme and tactics.

form, that programme and tactics are more important than organisation, that "the vitality of an organisation is in direct proportion to the volume and value of the content it puts into the movement", that centralism is not an "end in itself", not an "all-saving talisman", etc., etc. Great and profound truths! The programme is indeed more important than tactics, and tactics more important than organisation. The alphabet is more important than etymology, and etymology more important than syntax—but what would we say of people who, after failing in an examination in syntax, went about pluming and priding themselves on being left in a lower class for another year? Comrade Axelrod argued about principles of organisation like an opportunist (Paragraph 1), and behaved inside the organisation like an anarchist (League Congress)—and now he is trying to render Social-Democracy more profound. Sour grapes! What is organisation, properly speaking? Why, it is only a form. What is centralism? After all, it is not a talisman. What is syntax? Why, it is less important than etymology; it is only the form of combining the elements of etymology.... "Will not Comrade Alexandrov agree with us," the new editors of *Iskra* triumphantly ask, "when we say that the Congress did much more for the centralisation of Party work by drawing up a Party programme than by adopting Rules, however perfect the latter may seem?" (No. 56, Supplement.) It is to be hoped that this classical utterance will acquire a historic fame no less wide and no less lasting than Comrade Krichevsky's celebrated remark that Social-Democracy, like mankind, always sets itself only such tasks as it can perform. For the new *Iskra*'s piece of profundity is of exactly the same stamp. Why was Comrade Krichevsky's phrase held up to derision? Because he tried to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of tactics—their inability to set correct political tasks—by a commonplace which he wanted to palm off as philosophy. In exactly the same way the new *Iskra* tries to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of organisation—the intellectualist instability of certain comrades, which has led them to the point of anarchistic phrasemongering—by the commonplace that the programme is more important than the Rules, that questions of programme

are more important than questions of organisation! What is this but tail-ism? What is it but pluming oneself on having been left in a lower class for another year?

The adoption of a programme contributes more to the centralisation of the work than the adoption of Rules. How this commonplace, palmed off as philosophy, reeks of the mentality of the radical intellectual, who has much more in common with bourgeois decadence than with Social-Democracy! Why, the word centralisation is used in this famous phrase in a sense that is nothing but *symbolical*. If the authors of the phrase are unable or disinclined to think, they might at least have recalled the simple fact that the adoption of a programme together with the Bundists, far from leading to the centralisation of our common work, did not even save us from a split. Unity on questions of programme and tactics is an essential but by no means a sufficient condition for Party unity, for the centralisation of Party work (good God, what elementary things one has to spell out nowadays, when all concepts have been confused!). The latter requires, in addition, unity of organisation, which, in a party that has grown to be anything more than a mere family circle, is inconceivable without formal Rules, without the subordination of the minority to the majority and of the part to the whole. As long as we had no unity on the fundamental questions of programme and tactics, we bluntly admitted that we were living in a period of disunity and separate circles, we bluntly declared that before we could unite, lines of demarcation must be drawn; we did not even talk of the forms of a joint organisation, but exclusively discussed the new (at that time they really were new) problems of fighting opportunism on programme and tactics. At present, as we all agree, this fight has already produced a sufficient degree of unity, as formulated in the Party programme and the Party resolutions on tactics; we had to take the next step, and, by common consent, we did take it, working out the *forms* of a united organisation that would merge all the circles together. But now these forms have been half destroyed and we have been dragged back, dragged back to anarchistic conduct, to anarchistic phrases, to the revival of a circle in place of a Party editorial board. And this step back is being justified on the plea that the

alphabet is more helpful to literate speech than a knowledge of syntax!

The philosophy of tail-ism, which flourished three years ago in questions of tactics, is being resurrected today in relation to questions of organisation. Take the following argument of the new editors. "The militant Social-Democratic trend in the Party," says Comrade Alexandrov, "should be maintained not only by an ideological struggle, but by definite forms of organisation." Whereupon the editors edifyingly remark: "Not bad, this juxtaposition of ideological struggle and forms of organisation. The ideological struggle is a process, whereas the forms of organisation are only ... forms [believe it or not, that is what they say—No. 56, Supplement, p. 4, bottom of col. 1!] designed to clothe a fluid and developing content—the developing practical work of the Party." That is positively in the style of the joke about a cannon-ball being a cannon-ball and a bomb a bomb! The ideological struggle is a process, whereas the forms of organisation are only forms clothing the content! The point at issue is whether our ideological struggle is to have forms *of a higher type* to clothe it, the forms of a party organisation, binding on all, or the forms of the old disunity and the old circles. We have been dragged back from higher to more primitive forms, and this is being justified on the plea that the ideological struggle is a process, whereas forms—are only forms. That is just how Comrade Krichevsky in bygone days tried to drag us back from tactics-as-a-plan to tactics-as-a-process.

Take the new *Iskra*'s pompous talk about the "self-training of the proletariat", directed against those who are supposed to be in danger of missing the content because of the form (No. 58, editorial). Is this not Akimovism No. 2? Akimovism No. 1 justified the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in formulating tactical tasks by talking about the more "profound" content of "the proletarian struggle" and the self-training of the proletariat. Akimovism No. 2 justifies the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in the theory and practice of organisation by equally profound talk about organisation being merely a form and the self-training of the proletariat the important thing. Let me tell you gentlemen who are

so solicitous about the younger brother that the proletariat is not afraid of organisation and discipline! The proletariat will do nothing to have the worthy professors and high-school students who do not want to join an organisation recognised as Party members merely because they work under the control of an organisation. The proletariat is trained for organisation by its whole life, far more radically than many an intellectual prig. Having gained some understanding of our programme and our tactics, the proletariat will not start justifying backwardness in organisation by arguing that the form is less important than the content. It is not the proletariat, but *certain intellectuals* in our Party who lack *self-training* in the spirit of organisation and discipline, in the spirit of hostility and contempt for anarchistic talk. When they say that it is not ripe for organisation, the Akimovs No. 2 libel the proletariat just as the Akimovs No. 1 libelled it when they said that it was not ripe for the political struggle. The proletarian who has become a conscious Social-Democrat and feels himself a member of the Party will reject tail-ism in matters of organisation with the same contempt as he rejected tail-ism in matters of tactics.

Finally, consider the profound wisdom of the new *Iskra*'s "Practical Worker". "Properly understood," he says, "the idea of a 'militant' centralist organisation uniting and centralising the revolutionaries' *activities* [the italics are to make it look more profound] can only materialise naturally if such activities *exist* [both new and clever!]; organisation itself, being a form [mark that!], can only grow *simultaneously* [the italics are the author's, as throughout this quotation] with the growth of the revolutionary work which is its content." (No. 57.) Does not this remind you very much of the character in the folk tale who, on seeing a funeral, cried: "Many happy returns of the day"? I am sure there is not a practical worker (in the genuine sense of the term) in our Party who does not understand that it is precisely the form of our activities (i.e., our organisation) that has long been lagging, and lagging desperately, behind their content, and that only the Simple Simons in the Party could shout to people who are lagging: "Keep in line; don't run ahead!" Compare our Party, let us say, with the Bund. There

can be no question but that the *content** of the work of our Party is immeasurably richer, more varied, broader, and deeper than is the case with the Bund. The scope of our theoretical views is wider, our programme more developed, our influence among the mass of the workers (and not merely among the organised artisans) broader and deeper, our propaganda and agitation more varied; the pulse of the political work of both leaders and rank and file is more lively, the *popular* movements during demonstrations and general strikes more impressive, and our work among the non-proletarian strata more energetic. But the "form"? Compared with the Bund's, the "form" of our work is lagging unpardonably, lagging so that it is an eyesore and brings a blush of shame to the cheeks of anyone who does not merely "pick his teeth" when contemplating the affairs of his Party. The fact that the organisation of our work lags behind its content is our weak point, and it was our weak point long before the Congress, long before the Organising Committee was formed. The lame and undeveloped character of the form makes any serious step in the further development of the content impossible; it causes a shameful stagnation, leads to a waste of energy, to a discrepancy between word and deed. We have all been suffering wretchedly from this discrepancy, yet along come the Axelrods and "Practical Workers" of the new *Iskra* with their profound precept: the form must grow naturally, only simultaneously with the content!

That is where a small mistake on the question of organisation (Paragraph 1) will lead you if you try to *lend profundity* to nonsense and to find philosophical justification for opportunist talk. Marching slowly, in timid zigzags![119] we have heard this refrain in relation to questions of tactics; we are hearing it again in relation to questions of organisation. *Tail-ism in questions of organisation* is a natural and

* I leave quite aside the fact that the *content* of our Party work was mapped out at the Congress (in the programme, etc.) in the spirit of revolutionary Social-Democracy only *at the cost of a struggle*, a struggle against those very anti-*Iskra*-ists and that very Marsh whose representatives numerically predominate in our "minority". On this question of "content" it would he interesting also to compare, let us say, six issues of the old *Iskra* (Nos. 46-51) with twelve issues of the new *Iskra* (Nos. 52-63). But that will have to wait for some other time.

inevitable product of the mentality of the *anarchistic individualist* when he starts to elevate his anarchistic deviations (which at the outset may have been accidental) to a *system of views*, to special *differences of principle*. At the League Congress we witnessed the beginnings of this anarchism; in the new *Iskra* we are witnessing attempts to elevate it to a system of views. These attempts strikingly confirm what was already said at the Party Congress about the difference between the points of view of the bourgeois intellectual who attaches himself to the Social-Democratic movement and the proletarian who has become conscious of his class interests. For instance, this same "Practical Worker" of the new *Iskra* with whose profundity we are already familiar denounces me for visualising the Party "as an immense factory" headed by a director in the shape of the Central Committee (No. 57, Supplement). "Practical Worker" never guesses that this dreadful word of his immediately betrays the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual unfamiliar with either the practice or the theory of proletarian organisation. For the factory, which seems only a bogey to some, represents that highest form of capitalist co-operation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organise, and placed it at the head of all the other sections of the toiling and exploited population. And Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, has been and is teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as a means of exploitation (discipline based on fear of starvation) and the factory as a means of organisation (discipline based on collective work united by the conditions of a technically highly developed form of production). The discipline and organisation which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual are very easily acquired by the proletariat just because of this factory "schooling". Mortal fear of this school and utter failure to understand its importance as an organising factor are characteristic of the ways of thinking which reflect the petty-bourgeois mode of life and which give rise to the species of anarchism that the German Social-Democrats call *Edelanarchismus*, that is, the anarchism of the "noble" gentleman, or aristocratic anarchism, as I would call it. This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party

organisation as a monstrous "factory"; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as "serfdom" (see Axelrod's articles); division of labour under the direction of a centre evokes from him a tragicomical outcry against transforming people into "cogs and wheels" (to turn editors into contributors being considered a particularly atrocious species of such transformation); mention of the organisational Rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark (intended for the "formalists") that one could very well dispense with Rules altogether.

Incredible as it may seem, it was a didactic remark of just this sort that Comrade Martov addressed to me in *Iskra*, No. 58, quoting, for greater weight, my own words in *A Letter to a Comrade*. Well, what is it if not "aristocratic anarchism" and tail-ism to cite examples from the era of disunity, the era of the circles, to *justify* the preservation and glorification of the circle spirit and anarchy in the era of the Party?

Why did we not need Rules before? Because the Party consisted of separate circles without any organisational tie between them. Any individual could pass from one circle to another at his own "sweet will", for he was not faced with any formulated expression of the will of the whole. Disputes within the circles were not settled according to Rules, "*but by struggle and threats to resign*", as I put it in *A Letter to a Comrade*,* summarising the experience of a number of circles in general and of our own editorial circle of six in particular. In the era of the circles, this was natural and inevitable, but it never occurred to anybody to extol it, to regard it as ideal; everyone complained of the disunity, everyone was distressed by it and eager to see the isolated circles fused into a formally constituted party organisation. And now that this fusion has taken place, we are being dragged back and, under the guise of higher organisational views, treated to anarchistic phrase-mongering! To people accustomed to the loose dressing-gown and slippers of the Oblomov[120] circle domesticity, formal Rules seem narrow, restrictive, irksome, mean, and bureaucratic, a bond of

* See present edition, Vol. 6, pp. 229-50.—*Ed.*

serfdom and a fetter on the free "process" of the ideological struggle. Aristocratic anarchism cannot understand that formal Rules are needed precisely in order to replace the narrow circle ties by the broad Party tie. It was unnecessary and impossible to give formal shape to the internal ties of a circle or the ties between circles, for these ties rested on personal friendship or on an instinctive "confidence" for which no reason was given. The Party tie cannot and must not rest on either of these; it must be founded on *formal*, "bureaucratically" worded Rules (bureaucratic from the standpoint of the undisciplined intellectual), strict adherence to which can alone safeguard us from the wilfulness and caprices characteristic of the circles, from the circle wrangling that goes by the name of the free "process" of the ideological struggle.

The editors of the new *Iskra* try to trump Alexandrov with the didactic remark that "confidence is a delicate thing and cannot be hammered into people's hearts and minds" (No. 56, Supplement). The editors do not realise that by this talk about confidence, *naked* confidence, they are once more betraying their aristocratic anarchism and organisational tail-ism. When I was a member of a circle only—whether it was the circle of the six editors or the *Iskra* organisation—I was entitled to justify my refusal, say, to work with X merely on the grounds of lack of confidence, without stating reason or motive. But now that I have become a member of a party, *I have no right* to plead lack of confidence in general, for that would throw open the doors to all the freaks and whims of the old circles; I am *obliged* to give formal reasons for my "confidence" or "lack of confidence", that is, to cite a formally established principle of our programme, tactics or Rules; I must not just declare my "confidence" or "lack of confidence" without giving reasons, but must acknowledge that my decisions—and generally all decisions of any section of the Party—*have to be accounted for* to the whole Party; I am obliged to adhere to a *formally prescribed* procedure when giving expression to my "lack of confidence" or trying to secure the acceptance of the views and wishes that follow from this lack of confidence. From the *circle* view that "confidence" does not have to be accounted for, we have already risen to the *Party* view which demands

adherence to a formally prescribed procedure of expressing, accounting for, and *testing* our confidence; but the editors try to drag us back, and call their tail-ism new views on organisation!

Listen to the way our so-called Party editors talk about writers' groups that might demand representation on the editorial board. "We shall not get indignant and begin to shout about discipline", we are admonished by these aristocratic anarchists who have always and everywhere looked down on such a thing as discipline. We shall either "arrange the matter" (*sic*!) with the group, if it is sensible, or just laugh at its demands.

Dear me, what a lofty and noble rebuff to vulgar "factory" formalism! But in reality it is the old circle phraseology furbished up a little and served up to the Party by an editorial board which feels that it is not a Party institution, but the survival of an old circle. The intrinsic falsity of this position inevitably leads to the *anarchistic* profundity of elevating the disunity they hypocritically proclaim to be past and gone to a *principle* of Social-Democratic organisation. There is no need for any hierarchy of higher and lower Party bodies and authorities—aristocratic anarchism regards such a hierarchy as the bureaucratic invention of ministries, departments, etc. (see Axelrod's article); there is no need for the part to submit to the whole; there is no need for any "formal bureaucratic" definition of *Party* methods of "arranging matters" or of delimiting differences. Let the old circle wrangling be sanctified by pompous talk about "genuinely Social-Democratic" methods of organisation.

This is, where the proletarian who has been through the school of the "factory" can and should teach a lesson to anarchistic individualism. The class-conscious worker has long since emerged from the state of infancy when he used to fight shy of the intellectual as such. The class-conscious worker appreciates the richer store of knowledge and the wider political outlook which he finds among Social-Democratic intellectuals. But as we proceed with the building of a *real* party, the class-conscious worker must learn to distinguish the mentality of the soldier of the proletarian army from the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who parades anarchistic phrases; he must learn to *insist* that the duties

of a Party member be fulfilled not only by the rank and file, but by the "people at the top" as well; he must learn to treat tail-ism in matters of organisation with the same contempt as he used, in days gone by, to treat tail-ism in matters of tactics!

Inseparably connected with Girondism and aristocratic anarchism is the last characteristic feature of the new *Iskra*'s attitude towards matters of organisation, namely, its defence of *autonomism* as against centralism. This is the meaning in principle (if it has any such meaning*) of its outcry against bureaucracy and autocracy, of its regrets about "an undeserved disregard for the non-*Iskra*-ists" (who defended autonomism at the Congress), of its comical howls about a demand for "unquestioning obedience", of its bitter complaints of "Jack-in-office rule", etc., etc. The opportunist wing of any party always defends and justifies all backwardness, whether in programme, tactics, or organisation. The new *Iskra*'s defence of backwardness in organisation (its tail-ism) is closely connected with the defence of *autonomism*. True, autonomism has, generally speaking, been so discredited already by the three years' propaganda work of the old *Iskra* that the new *Iskra* is ashamed, *as yet*, to advocate it openly; it still assures us of its sympathy for centralism, but shows it only by printing the word centralism in italics. Actually, it is enough to apply the slightest touch of criticism to the "principles" of the "genuinely Social-Democratic" (not anarchistic?) quasi-centralism of the new *Iskra* for the autonomist standpoint to be detected at every step. Is it not now clear to all and sundry that on the subject of organisation Axelrod and Martov have swung over to Akimov? Have they not solemnly admitted it themselves in the significant words, "undeserved disregard for the non-*Iskra*-ists"? And what was it but autonomism that Akimov and his friends defended at our Party Congress?

It was autonomism (if not anarchism) that Martov and Axelrod defended at the League Congress when, with amusing zeal, they tried to prove that the part need not submit to the whole, that the part is autonomous in defining its

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* I leave aside here, as in this section generally, the "co-optational" meaning of this outcry.

relation to the whole, that the Rules of the League, in which that relation is formulated, are valid in defiance of the will of the Party majority, in defiance of the will of the Party centre. And it is autonomism that Comrade Martov is now openly defending in the columns of the new *Iskra* (No. 60) in the matter of the right of the Central Committee to appoint members to the local committees. I shall not speak of the puerile sophistries which Comrade Martov used to defend autonomism at the League Congress, and is still using in the new *Iskra**—the important thing here is to note the undoubted tendency to *defend autonomism against centralism*, which is a fundamental characteristic of opportunism in matters of organisation.

Perhaps the only attempt to *analyse* the concept bureaucracy is the distinction drawn in the new *Iskra* (No. 53) between the "formal *democratic* principle" (author's italics) and the "formal *bureaucratic* principle". This distinction (which, unfortunately, was no more developed or explained than the reference to the non-*Iskra*-ists) contains a grain of truth. Bureaucracy *versus* democracy is in fact centralism *versus* autonomism; it is the organisational principle of revolutionary Social-Democracy as opposed to the organisational principle of opportunist Social-Democracy. The latter strives to proceed from the bottom upward, and, therefore, wherever possible and as far as possible, upholds autonomism and "democracy", carried (by the overzealous) to the point of anarchism. The former strives to proceed from the top downward, and upholds an extension of the rights and powers of the centre in relation to the parts. In the period of disunity and separate circles, this top from which revolutionary Social-Democracy strove to proceed organisationally was inevitably one of the circles, the one enjoying most influence by virtue of its activity and its revolutionary consistency (in our case, the *Iskra* organisation). In the period of the restoration of actual Party unity and dis-

* In enumerating various paragraphs of the Rules, Comrade Martov *omitted* the one which deals with the relation of the whole to the part: the Central Committee "allocates the Party forces" (Paragraph 6). Can one allocate forces without transferring people from one committee to another? It is positively awkward to have to dwell on such elementary things.

solution of the obsolete circles in this unity, this top is inevitably the *Party Congress*, as the supreme organ of the Party; the Congress as far as possible includes representatives of all the active organisations, and, by appointing the central institutions (often with a membership which satisfies the advanced elements of the Party more than the backward and is more to the taste of its revolutionary than its opportunist wing), makes them the top until the next Congress. Such, at any rate, is the case among the Social-Democratic Europeans, although little by little this custom, so abhorrent in principle to anarchists, is beginning to spread—not without difficulty and not without conflicts and squabbles—to the Social-Democratic Asiatics.

It is highly interesting to note that these fundamental characteristics of opportunism in matters of organisation (autonomism, aristocratic or intellectualist anarchism, tailism, and Girondism) are, *mutatis mutandis* with appropriate modifications), to be observed in all the Social-Democratic parties in the world, wherever there is a division into a a revolutionary and an opportunist wing (and where is there not?). Only quite recently this was very strikingly revealed in the German Social-Democratic Party, when its defeat at the elections in the 20th electoral division of Saxony (known as the Göhre incident*) brought the question of the *principles* of party organisation to the fore. That this incident should have become an issue of principle was largely due to the zeal of the German opportunists. Göhre (an ex-parson, author of the fairly well-known book *Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter*,** and one of the "heroes" of the Dresden Congress) is himself an extreme opportunist and the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (*Socialist Monthly*),[122] the organ of the consistent German opportunists, at once "took up the cudgels" on his behalf.

* Göhre was returned to the Reichstag on June 16, 1903, from the 15th division of Saxony, but after the Dresden Congress[121] he resigned his seat. The electorate of the 20th division, which had fallen vacant on the death of Rosenow, wanted to put forward Göhre as candidate. The Central Party Executive and the Regional Party Executive for Saxony opposed this, and while they had no formal right to forbid Göhre's nomination, they succeeded in getting him to decline. The Social-Democrats were defeated at the polls.

** *Three Months as a Factory Worker.—Ed.*

Opportunism in programme is naturally connected with opportunism in tactics and opportunism in organisation. The exposition of the "new" point of view was undertaken by Comrade Wolfgang Heine. To give the reader some idea of the political complexion of this typical intellectual, who on joining the Social-Democratic movement brought with him opportunist habits of thought, it is enough to say that Comrade Wolfgang Heine is something less than a German Comrade Akimov and something more than a German Comrade Egorov.

Comrade Wolfgang Heine took the field in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* with no less pomp than Comrade Axelrod in the new *Iskra*. The very title of his article is priceless: "Democratic Observations on the Göhre Incident" (*Sozialistische Monatshefte*, No. 4, April). The contents are no less thunderous. Comrade W. Heine rises up in arms against "encroachments on the autonomy of the constituency", champions "the democratic principle", and protests against the interference of an "appointed authority" (i.e., the Central Party Executive) in the free election of deputies by the people. The point at issue, Comrade W. Heine admonishes us, is not a random incident, but a general "*tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party*", a tendency, he says, which was to be observed before, but which is now becoming particularly dangerous. It must be "recognised as a principle that the local institutions of the Party are the vehicles of Party life" (a plagiarism on Comrade Martov's pamphlet *Once More in the Minority*). We must not "accustom ourselves to having all important political decisions come from one centre", and must warn the Party against "a doctrinaire policy which loses contact with life" (borrowed from Comrade Martov's speech at the Party Congress to the effect that "life will assert itself"). Rendering his argument more profound, Comrade W. Heine says: "...If we go down to the roots of the matter and leave aside personal conflicts, which here, as everywhere, have played no small part, this bitterness against the *revisionists* [the italics are the author's and evidently hint at a distinction between fighting revisionism and fighting revisionists] will be found to be mainly expressive of the distrust of the Party officialdom for '*outsiders*' [W. Heine had apparently not yet read the pamphlet

about combating the state of siege, and therefore resorted to an Anglicism—*Outsidertum*], the distrust of tradition for the unusual, of the impersonal institution for everything individual [see Axelrod's resolution at the League Congress on the suppression of individual initiative]—in short, of that tendency which we have defined above as a tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party."

The idea of "discipline" inspires Comrade W. Heine with a no less noble disgust than Comrade Axelrod.... "The revisionists," he writes, "have been accused of lack of discipline for having written for the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, an organ whose Social-Democratic character has even been denied because it is not *controlled by the Party*. This very attempt to narrow down the concept 'Social-Democratic', this insistence on *discipline* in the sphere of ideological production, where absolute freedom should prevail [remember: the ideological struggle is a process whereas the forms of organisation are only forms], demonstrates the tendency towards bureaucracy and the suppression of individuality". And W. Heine goes on and on, fulminating against this detestable tendency to create "*one* big all-embracing organisation, as centralised as possible, *one* set of tactics, and *one* theory", against the demand for "implicit obedience", "blind submission", against "oversimplified centralism", etc., etc., literally "*à la* Axelrod".

The controversy started by W. Heine spread, and as there were no squabbles about co-optation in the German Party to obscure the issue, and as the German Akimovs display their complexion not only at congresses, but all the time, in a periodical of their own, the argument soon boiled down to an analysis of the principles of the orthodox and revisionist trends on the question of organisation. Karl Kautsky came forward (in the *Neue Zeit*, 1904, No. 28, in the article "*Wahlkreis und Partei*"—"Constituency and Party") as one of the spokesmen of the revolutionary trend (which, exactly as in our Party, was of course accused of "dictatorship", "inquisitorial" tendencies, and other dreadful things). W. Heine's article, he says, "expresses the line of thought of the whole revisionist trend". Not only in Germany, but in France and Italy as well, the opportunists are all staunch supporters of autonomism, of a slackening of Party disci-

pline, of reducing it to naught; everywhere their tendencies lead to *disorganisation* and to perverting "the democratic principle" into *anarchism*. "Democracy does not mean absence of authority," Karl Kautsky informs the opportunists on the subject of organisation, "democracy does not mean anarchy; it means the rule of the masses over their representatives, in distinction to other forms of rule, where the supposed servants of the people are in reality their masters." Kautsky traces at length the disruptive role played by opportunist autonomism in various countries; he shows that it is precisely the influx of "*a great number of bourgeois elements*"* into the Social-Democratic movement that is strengthening opportunism, autonomism, and the tendency to violate discipline; and once more he reminds us that "organisation is the weapon that will emancipate the proletariat", that "organisation is the characteristic weapon of the proletariat in the class struggle".

In Germany, where opportunism is weaker than in France or Italy, "autonomist tendencies have so far led only to more or less passionate declamations against dictators and grand inquisitors, against excommunication** and heresy-hunting, and to endless cavilling and squabbling, which would only result in endless strife if replied to by the other side".

It is not surprising that in Russia, where opportunism in the Party is even weaker than in Germany, autonomist tendencies should have produced fewer ideas and more "passionate declamations" and squabbling.

It is not surprising that Kautsky arrives at the following conclusion: "There is perhaps no other question on which revisionism in all countries, despite its multiplicity of form and hue, is so alike as on the question of organisation." Kautsky, too, defines the basic tendencies of orthodoxy and revisionism in this sphere with the help of the "dreadful word": bureaucracy *versus* democracy. We are told, he says, that to give the Party leadership the right to influence the

* Kautsky mentions *Jaurès* as an example. The more these people deviated towards opportunism, the more "they were bound to consider Party discipline an impermissible constraint on their free personality".

** *Bannstrahl*: excommunication. This is the German equivalent of the Russian "state of siege" and "emergency laws". It is the "dreadful word" of the German opportunists.

selection of candidates (for parliament) by the constituencies is "a shameful encroachment on the democratic principle, which demands that all political activity proceed from the bottom upward, by the independent activity of the masses, and not from the top downward, in a bureaucratic way.... But if there is any democratic principle, it is that the majority must have predominance over the minority, and not the other way round...." The election of a member of parliament by any constituency is an important matter for the Party as a whole, which should influence the nomination of candidates, if only through its representatives (*Vertrauensmänner*). "Whoever considers this too bureaucratic or centralistic let him suggest that candidates be nominated by the direct vote of the Party membership at large [*sämtliche Parteigenossen*]. If he thinks this is not practicable, he must not complain of a lack of democracy when this function, like many others that concern the Party as a whole, is exercised by one or several Party bodies." It has long been "common law" in the German Party for constituencies to "come to a friendly understanding" with the Party leadership about the choice of candidates. "But the Party has grown too big for this tacit common law to suffice any longer. Common law ceases to be law when it ceases to be accepted as a matter of course, when its stipulations, and even its very existence, are called in question. Then it becomes necessary to formulate the law specifically, to codify it" ... to go over to more "precise statutory definition* [*statutarische Festlegung*] and, accordingly, greater strictness [*grössere Straffheit*] of organisation".

Thus you have, in a different environment, the same struggle between the opportunist and the revolutionary wing of the Party on the question of organisation, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy", between the tendency to relax

* It is highly instructive to compare these remarks of Kautsky's about the replacement of a tacitly recognised common law by a formally defined statutory law with that whole "change-over" which our Party in general, and the editorial board in particular, have been undergoing since the Party Congress. Cf. the speech of V. I. Zasulich (at the League Congress, p. 66 et seq.), who does not seem to realise the full significance of this change-over.

and the tendency to tighten organisation and discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and that of the staunch proletarian, between intellectualist individualism and proletarian solidarity. What, one asks, was the attitude to this conflict of *bourgeois democracy*—not the bourgeois democracy which prankish history has only promised in private to show to Comrade Axelrod some day, but the real and actual bourgeois democracy which in Germany has spokesmen no less shrewd and observant than our own gentlemen of *Osvobozhdeniye*? German bourgeois democracy at once reacted to the new controversy, and—like Russian bourgeois democracy, like bourgeois democracy everywhere and always—sided solidly with the opportunist wing of the Social-Democratic Party. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, leading organ of the German stock exchange, published a thunderous editorial (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, April 7, 1904, No. 97, evening edition) which shows that shameless plagiarising of Axelrod is becoming a veritable disease with the German press. The stern democrats of the Frankfort stock exchange lash out furiously at the "absolutism" in the Social-Democratic Party, at the "party dictatorship", at the "autocratic rule of the Party authorities", at the "interdicts" which are intended "concurrently to chastise revisionism as a whole" (recall the "false accusation of opportunism"), at the insistence on "blind obedience", "deadening discipline", "servile subordination", and the transforming of Party members into "political corpses" (that is a good bit stronger than cogs and wheels!). "All distinctiveness of personality", the knights of the stock exchange indignantly exclaim at the sight of the undemocratic regime among the Social-Democrats, "all individuality is to be held in opprobrium, because it is feared that they might lead to the French order of things, to Jaurèsism and Millerandism, as was stated in so many words by Sindermann, who made the report on the subject" at the Party Congress of the Saxon Social-Democrats .

And so, insofar as the new catchwords of the new *Iskra* on organisation contain any principles at all, there can be no doubt that they are opportunist principles. This conclu-

mann. Los feroces demócratas de la Bolsa de Francfort flagelan a la "autocracia" en el partido socialdemócrata, a la "dictadura del partido", a la "dominación tiránica de los jefes del partido", a esas "excomuniones" mediante las cuales se quiere "castigar, por así decirlo, a todo el revisionismo" (recordad lo de "la calumniosa acusación de oportunismo"); a esta "obediencia ciega", a esta "disciplina que mata" y a esta "sumisión de lacayo" que se exigen y que transforman a los miembros del partido en "cadáveres políticos". (¡He aquí algo todavía mucho más fuerte que las "ruedas" y los "tornillos"!). Toda originalidad, gritan con indignación los caballeros de la Bolsa a propósito del régimen "antidemocrático" de la socialdemocracia, toda individualidad debe estar a merced de las persecuciones, porque amenaza con conducir al régimen francés, al jauresismo y al millerandismo, como lo ha declarado sin rodeos Zindermann, ponente acerca de esta cuestión, en el Congreso de los socialdemócratas sajones.

Así las nuevas elucubraciones de la nueva *Iskra* sobre la cuestión de la organización son, no hay la menor duda, oportunistas.

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A pesar de la guerra ruso-japonesa, comenzada el 27 de enero de 1904, a pesar del vasto movimiento de huelgas y de manifestaciones obreras que se extendía por todo el Sur de Rusia, a pesar de las graves cuestiones políticas planteadas por la incapacidad y la corrupción cada vez más evidentes del régimen, el folleto de Lenin fué objeto, durante largos meses, de una vasta y viva polémica. Entre los socialdemócratas rusos en el extranjero, los mencheviques le atacaron fre-

suficiente en la Iskra, y estos pudieron vanagloriarse de tener a su lado a Kautsky y a Rosa Luxemburgo. Esta, en dos artículos publicados a la vez en la Iskra y en la Neue Zeit (núm. 42 y 43, julio de 1904), somete a una fuerte crítica en particular el capítulo cuya traducción precede. Rosa Luxemburgo reprocha a Lenin su definición del socialdemócrata revolucionario como un jacobino "ligado" a la organización de los obreros conscientes, por consiguiente exterior a ella, siendo así que la "socialdemocracia es el movimiento mismo de la clase obrera". Estima injusto establecer una relación de igualdad entre "autonomismo" y oportunismo de los intelectuales, e invocar a este respecto el ejemplo de Occidente, donde el peligro oportunista resulta del medio político del parlamentarismo y no del estado psicológico de una categoría de individuos; ningún estatuto establecido de antemano, por severo que sea, preservará contra un peligro que sin cesar renace bajo nuevas formas; en fin, "nada entrega un movimiento obrero todavía joven tan fácil y tan seguramente a los caprichos de los intelectuales como su aprisionamiento en la coraza de un centralismo burocrático".

FIN DEL TOMO PRIMERO

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